

THE
DOCTRINE
OF
GOD's Eternal DECREES
STATED:
AND HIS
RIGHTEOUSNESS
THEREIN
CLEAR'D and VINDICATED.

By **John Hunt**, Minister of the Gospel.

John xii. 48. *The Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the Last Day.*

Iosea viii. 12. *I have written to him the great Things of my Law, but they were counted as a strange Thing.*

Isaiah xli. 10. ----- *My Counsel shall stand, and I will do all my Pleasure.*



N O R W I C H :

Printed by *Henry Cross-grove* for the Author, and Sold
by *R. Ford* Bookfeller in the Poultry London, 1726.

DOCTRINE

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THEIR

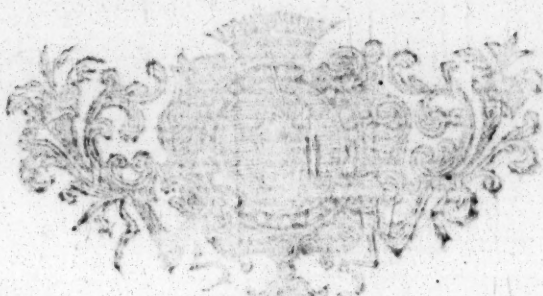
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By JOHN WHEAT, Minister of the Gospel.

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Printed by J. WHEAT, at the Gospel Office, in New York.

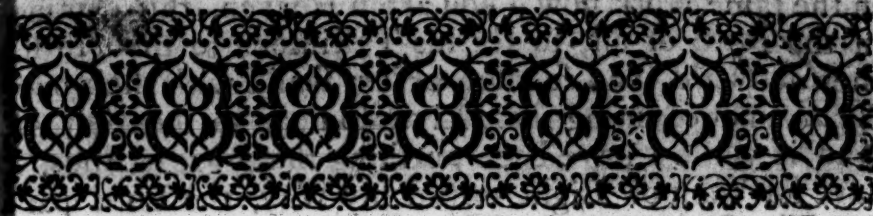


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TO THE KING of KINGS.

Most Sovereign Lord,

AS I hope the Things contain'd in this Book are Thine, compos'd by Thy gracious Assistance, and sincerely design'd for Thy Glory, in the Clearing the exceeding Riches of Thy Grace in the Salvation of Some, from those Mists and Fogs with which so many have obscur'd it; and the Justice and Equity of Thy Proceedings with the worst of Thine Enemies, against those vile Aspersions cast thereon by such whose Eyes the God of this World hath blinded; in deep Humility I dedicate it unto Thee, from Whom I receiv'd it. As 'tis common among Men to dedicate their Labours of this Nature to their Highest and Best Friends, so taking Thee undoubtedly to be both to me, I humbly crave Leave to cast this small Mite into the vast and rich Treasury which many of Thy faithful Servants now in Heaven have left behind them on Earth, to confirm Thy chosen and called Ones in the Faith once deliver'd to them, and which Thou hast commanded us so earnestly to contend for: And I am no little encouraged hereunto, notwithstanding my Unfitness for this Work, by considering Thou despisest not the Day of small Things: And I trust that as Thou didst chuse some of the lowest Rank of Men to be Thy constant Attendants when on Earth, and to make known by them the Mysteries of Thy Grace to the dark World that lay in Ignorance,

so Thou wilt not despise one of the same, and employ'd in the same Work now Thou art in Heaven, tho' coming in the Rere of all, to set his Testimony to the Truths they deliver'd, and so many of 'em seal'd with their own Blood, not counting their Lives so dear to themselves: And if while I have been pursuing these great Ends, I have for Want of Light miss'd my Way, the Lord pardon Thy Servant in this Thing; but if not, he humbly entreats Thy Testimony hereunto, by setting home the Truths contain'd herein on the Consciences of the Readers, and thereby to honour the unworthy Author, under all the Reflections that may for Thy Sake be cast upon him by Men reprobate concerning the Faith, and thereby witnessing that they have not spoken of Thee the Thing that is right, as thy Servant *John* hath: And tho' Thou knowest that many of the Great Men of this World are still setting themselves against Thee, endeavouring to obscure the Glory of Thy Priestly, Kingly, and Prophetical Office; yet go on Thou Universal Monarch in the Triumphs of Thy Grace, till all Thy Foes are made Thy Footstool, and made to know that Thou art GOD, by causing clearer Beams of heavenly Light to shine into the Hearts of the Children thereof, and by scattering that thick Darkness that hath obnubilated the Minds of many, that so Truth and Peace may both continue and flourish in our Day, and till Time shall be no more; and that all Thy Saints that are in the same Way made Partakers of the same Spiritual Blessing, that are designing the same End, and are going to the same Place may speak the same Things, so prayeth,

Dread SOVEREIGN,

Thy most unworthy Servant,

JOHN HUNT

T O T H E
Poor of CHRIST'S Family.

Dearly Beloved Brethren,

I Dare not presume to dedicate this Book to any among Men that bear a higher Character than Yourselfes, lest I should incur their highest Displeasure thereby; well knowing how Few Great Men in the World will countenance the Truths contain'd herein: I therefore dedicate it to You, and hope You will not be ashamed to own the Truth under the Character I give You. **CHRIST** had but few Great Men follow'd him when on Earth, and (I fear) not many now he is in Heaven.

Many are now for what they call **polite preaching**, and to have their Dishes finely garnished tho' they have but little savoury Meat therein: But I hope better Things of You, and Things that accompany Salvation: A plain Dialect every Way best suits with You. **GOD** puts his Heavenly
 Treasure

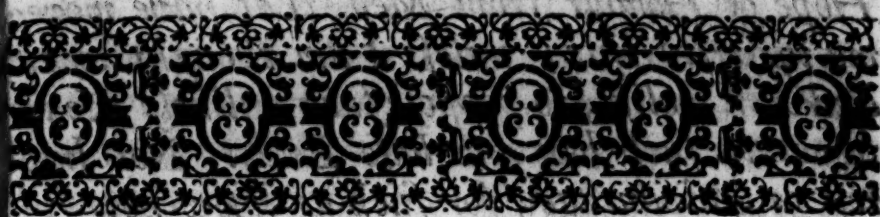
Treasure into Earthen Vessels. The Apostle tells us of some that were Poor, yet making many Rich; as having Nothing, and yet possessing All Things. I call You Brethren, as not ashamed of You, and being willing to be Ranked with You. May We as much excel others in Grace, and Knowledge of Divine Mysteries, as they excel us in the Things of this Life; we shall be Rich enough when we get Home. Brethren pray for me, and that GOD would bless these Truths: And if what I have written herein is thought Useless, and perhaps Nauseous to such as are above You, yet if it may be but a Furtherance to your Faith and Joy I shall be satisfied. Christ's Lambs must be fed. As You have no Silver or Gold to spare, so neither do I covet either: I seek not Yours, but You: Your Interest at the Throne of Grace for Me, will Richly compensate my poor Labour of Love for You: Which is the hearty Desire of

Your Brother in Tribulation,

John Hunt.



T H E



THE
Epistle to the READER.

Christian Reader,

WHEN I consider how Deep the Myste-
ries are herein treated on, and my weak
and shallow Capacity to treat on them,
I must with all Humility own my Insuffici-
ency for these Things: But seeing God often
hides those Things from the Wise and Prudent
which he reveals unto Babes, Matt. xi. 25.
and the Psalmist saith, Psal. viii. 2. Out of
the Mouth of Babes and Sucklings hast Thou
ordained Strength, because of Thine Ene-
mies, that Thou mightest still the Enemy
and the Avenger; by these, and such like
Texts, I am encouraged to undertake this
Work.

I presume I need not say much to convince
the worst Enemy that either the Truths of
God or I have, that it is not Self-Interest, or
Hope

Hope of Honour from Men, that have moved me to write this; unless I am thought weak, and even foolish, to propose such unlikely Means to obtain such low and base Ends. Not Interest or Advantage; for such as know how full the World is of Books, and how hard to sell an Impression by the single Interest of the Author, unless adorn'd with Prefaces from some Honourable Hands, of which mine has none will soon clear me from such a Charge. Nor can Hope of Honour from Men; being sensible the Truths herein defended, are almost everywhere spoken against; so that I cannot expect hereby to gain the least Applause of Men, but rather to incur their highest Displeasure, for maintaining those as Fundamental Truths which they are trampling under Foot: So that while I am writing, I am but girding on my Harness to encounter with such as are bidding Defiance to the Truths of God. But as Paul did not count his Life dear to himself, that he might testify the Gospel of the Grace of God; so tho' I may hereby expose myself to the Scorn of many, yet if I may but defend the Truth, none of these Things shall move me; and hope I shall be able to say as 1 Cor. iv. 3. But with me it is a very small Thing to be judged of you, or of Man's Judgment. I expect that the Legions of the Darkness of this World, with their shatter'd Forces, will come forth against me; but having my Loins girt about with Truth, I fear 'em not.

But

But who are they that will be offended with this Doctrin? Sure I am, no true Son of the Church of England, for she hath sufficiently cleared herself in this Matter; and all that full have been admitted into Holy Orders, have declared their Assent and Consent hereunto: But lest some of them should since have forgotten somewhat they then so solemnly ex Animo subscribed to, I shall rehearse her Words, that she may not be unjustly blamed.

ART. XVII. Predestination to Life is the everlasting Purpose of God, whereby, before the Foundations of the World were laid, he hath constantly decreed by his Counsel, secret to us, to deliver from Curse and Damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of Mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting Salvation, &c.

What can be said more clearly to the Point Paul's Hand than is here said? And who can be so uncharitable as to think that any true Sons of that Church, that are joined to her, or that have the least Love for her, can deny, or once in Question, what she hath so clearly affirmed? No, they must be Bastards, and not with sons, that can do this.

But some have said, they subscribed this Article not as an Article of Faith, but as an Article of Peace: Oh, peaceable Men to subscribe to that which they then thought to be false, and thereby sell their own Souls to buy Peace! But as Jchu

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said to Joram, Is it Peace? He answer'd, What Peace, so long as the Whoredoms of thy Mother Jezebel are so many! So what Peace can be preserved or obtained by such unlawfull Ways and Means? 'Tis worth Enquiry what this Peace is; for one would think it was some excellent Peace, that they should pay so dear for it. Well then, Was it Peace of Conscience? No surely: For that is such a tender Thing that, unless it is past feeling, it can never consent to, or have any Peace in such vile Practices: As nothing is wont to cause greater Disturbance to the Conscience than to sin against Light, so for any to seek to pacifie it by such Means as tend to disturb and disquiet it is preposterous. Nor could it be to preserve the Peace of the Church to which they did belong; for why should it be thought that they not subscribing that Article should more disturb the Peace of that Church, than their denying it, and casting Contempt on it, after they had subscrib'd? This seems much rather to tend to the disturbing that Church's Peace seeing the Ends of that Church in proposing or rather imposing, and their Ends in complying, did so vastly differ. Had the Church that composed that Article been sensible that many of her Sons had so play'd the Hypocrites with God and Man, as to subscribe for Peace sake to what they thought had no Truth in it, she would certainly have disown'd them as Children.

What Children, or at least stript them of their Canonical Robes, as unfit to be Preachers of Truth, who enter'd into that Sacred Work with a Lie in their Right-Hand: And seeing that Church now in Being stands on the same Bottom, and still retains the same Faith, I think they can do no less for the Honour of that Truth and their Constitution, than shew the same Resentment of such as thus expose her: For what greater Contempt can be cast on a Church, than for any that own themselves Sons of that Church, and that live on her Bread, to affirm that such a Church retains, believes, and even imposes, such Things, and on her Children too, as have it no Truth in them? Unless they intend by Content soon to make some considerable Alteration in their Constitution for the Worse, and then who can tell where they will make their last Stand? When once the Foundation is removed, the whole Building must not only be in Danger, but unavoidably fall.

So that the only Peace that could be secured this Way must be Peace in Families, by proposing hereby those Domestick Fairs and Disorders which often arise from Want of Things necessary and convenient. But whether it is consistent with Honesty and Sincerity, to buy such a Peace at so dear a Rate, I leave it to the true Sons of that Church to determine; and do in hope that none will think that herein I reflect as upon that Church, since I am only speaking of children.

such as are the Scab of it, and seek to ruin it by departing from the Faith once deliver'd to them; and so justifie and encourage others to dissent from her: For who can be supposed to join to that Church, or to continue with Peace in it, when they see such Multitudes of her own Members departing from it, and thereby declaring that the Errors that they think are received by it are so dangerous, that it is safer for them to break the most Sacred Ties to escape, than to continue in her Faith? If once a Church departs from the Faith, 'tis no Wonder if God and good Men depart from such Church; and then she will no more deserve the Name, or at least will have but a Name. And he that can deny this one Article of Predestination, will with much Ease be brought to deny all others that depend thereon; Election our Fall in Adam, particular Redemption Man's Impotency, and the Saints Security stand and fall together.

These Times were foretold 1 Tim. iv. 1, Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter Times some shall depart from the Faith giving Heed to seducing Spirits, and Doctrine of Devils: 'Tis the Devil that draws Souls from the Truth; but who they are that shall thus depart from the Faith he tells us ver. 2 Such as speak Lies in Hypocrisie, having their Conscience seared as with an hot Iron.

Nor have I any more Reason to think that any sincere Dissenter will list himself into this desperate Service, since they have laid themselves under the same Ties to qualifie themselves to preach; or that ever after such solemn Vows they will so much as make Enquiries, which was so much their Duty before they made them: 'Tis true, when Mistakes are made, and known, they ought to be rectified; but Care ought to be taken that they are Mistakes, lest the last Error is worse than the first; Where there being a Woe denounced against such as put Darknes for Light, and Bitter for Sweet, and that call Evil Good: So that to suppose And this Doctrin to give Offence to such, is equally to suppose that they make Gain their greatest Godliness; and that their solemn subscribing to this blessed Truth, was more from Love to their Places of Profit that hereby they were qualified for, than any true Love for those Truths that they subscribed to. So that neither of the above-named can oppose this Truth, but such as are guilty of the worst of Perjury: And who will regard such, since the Appropriation of such must rather be a Disgrace than an Honour to any Man's Person or Writings?

Tho' Truth is fallen in the Gate, yet Wisdom hath some few Children left, by whom she is and will be justified; who hold the Truth in the Love of it, and are grieved to see so many departing

departing from the Faith; to see the Courage and Boldness of some in opposing the Truth, and the base Cowardliness in others to defend it; whose Love to the Truths of Christ, is much like theirs to Christ, John xii. 42, 43. Many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the Synagogues: For they loved the Praise of Men more than the Praise of God. Poor Christians surely, and no Wonder to see these weeping; for if these Foundation Truths fall, the Building cannot stand: I will not say that it is by these that I am prest into this Service, lest I bring them under Disgrace as well as myself; them for requesting, as well as myself for complying: No, I'll take the Honour or Disgrace to myself, by owning that as the Matter is my own, and not stolen from others, so the Motives exciting me hereunto are not taken from Men, any farther than it may conduce to their Advantage, by confirming them in the present Truths.

I am not unsensible that several far abler than myself have engag'd in this good Work before me, yet I hope there is Room for something more from me; the more Witnesses to any Truth the better: Nor am I without Encouragement to undertake this Work; for when formerly I preached some Sermons on this Subject, some that were ignorant of these Truths, if not Enemies to them, not only declar'd their

Approbation

Approbation of them, but Love to them, and Comfort they receiv'd from them.

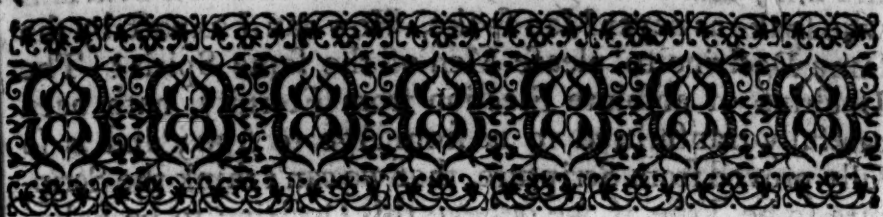
I am not herein writing in Defence of any Party, nor have I been guided by any of their Schemes: I do not follow Calvin as an infallible Person, having a more sure Word of Propheſie, to which I ſhall do well to take Heed: My Deſign herein is to narrow the unhappy Differences of our preſent Age, if God will make Uſe of ſo weak and unworthy an Inſtrument for ſo good and great a Work: I have Reaſon to think one Thing that hath cauſed ſuch Prejudice to theſe Truths, and ſuch as depend hereon, is the unwary Expreſſions of ſuch as have been Advocates for them; 'tis No, too often that Contenders, in the Warmth of their Spirits, run both into Extreame: I have carefully avoided theſe, that ſo I may not lay a Stumbling-Stone before any.

I ſhall conclude this Epistle with a neceſſary Caution to the Reader, not to think the worſe of this Book, much leſs to condemn it, becauſe thou heareſt of ſome that deſpiſe it: For if All had been of One Mind, this Book had never came out. As it was wrote to ſupport the ſinking Inter-eſt of ſuch as ſincerely love theſe Truths, ſo I hope none of theſe will ſlight them, tho' they may be much (not to ſay every where) ſpoken againſt; and that by ſuch, whoſe Lips ſhould keep Knowledge. Since we are told, That Great Men are not always Wiſe, neither do

do the Aged understand Judgment, mere Learning cannot lead any into Gospel-Mysteries. The Way in which God saves such as believe, was in the Apostles Days counted Foolishness; and that not only by the Ignorant and Unlearned, but by the Worldly Wise: Hence God challeng'd them All, 1 Cor. i. 20. Where is the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer of this World? These Words the Wise, the Scribe, the Disputer of this World, do doubtless comprehend the highest Degree of Wisdom and Learning that Carnal Man can attain unto: As if God had said, Let them All come forth with their strong Reasonings, and you shall see what Fools I'll make of 'em all. Where is he? Or what hath he done hereby to promote the Glory of God, or Good of Souls? As if he had said, I can tell you of many Souls that have been Converted by That Preaching which seems Foolishness unto you; but as for you, with all your Learning and subtil Disputes, What Use have you been of? Or what have you done for God, or God done by you? Since therefore we shall not be judged according to other Men's Schemes, but by the unerring Word of GOD, Read and Judge for yourselves, and the God of Truth lead you into all Truth: So prayeth

Your Souls Well-Wisher,

John Hunt.



THE DOCTRINE

OF

God's Eternal Decrees, &c.

Romans ix. 14.

What shall we say then? Is there Unrighteousness with God? God forbid.



THESE Words have Reference to the foregoing Verses, wherein the Apostle is setting forth the Sovereignty of God in chusing *Jacob* and rejecting *Esau*, before the former had done any Good, or the latter done any Evil; yea, before either of them were born: To shew it was not any Good done that moved God to chuse the one, or any Evil done that moved him to pass by the other; but a meer Act of Sovereignty to both. Tho' I do not expect that all Men will consent hereunto; but some perhaps will say as they, *This is a hard Saying, Who can bear it?* Men naturally hate this Doctrine, and the Preachers of it. When our Lord had preached this Doctrine, the People were filled with Wrath, and endeavour'd to

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kill him, *Luke iv. 25 to 29*: And if so offended with him, who spake as never Man spake, How can I expect by the same Doctrine to please Men of the same Spirit? The Doctrine of absolute Election from Eternity, hath been carefully transmitted to us from Age to Age; and is so fully proved from Scripture, that we can't think the Scripture to be True if we believe this Doctrine to be False: Yet how great is the Opposition this blessed Doctrine meets with, and that not only from the profane World, but from such as seem to make a Figure in Churches? As the Apostle says, *Acts xx. 30. Also of your own selves shall Men arise, speaking perverse Things*. Now when Things are come to this, it concerns such as are set for the Defence of the Truth to be as zealous to defend it, as others are to oppose it; and to inquire how it comes to be so much opposed, and whether it is a Truth, since such as so oppose it cannot think it so. The Scripture is full to prove this Doctrine of eternal and absolute Election, *Ephesians i. 4. According as he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy*. Mind, it was before Time, and not for any Works done or foreseen; not chosen because holy, but to the End we might be so: Our Holiness is brought in as the Effect, not the Cause of our Election. So *Rom. ix. 11. For the Children being not yet born, neither having done any Good or Evil, that the Purpose of God according to Election might stand.* 2 *Tim. i. 9. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling; not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpose, which he hath given us in Christ Jesus before the World began.* So that it is not for Want of Scripture Proof that this Doctrine is so much opposed, nor can it be because it is more injurious to the Salvation of Mankind than the contrary Doctrine; no, nor so much: For by this Some, tho' but a Remnant, shall certainly be saved; by the contrary All may perish, for not doing what is necessary to Salvation. Nor can I see by that Scheme how any can be saved, since Man is so unable to do what is absolutely necessary to be done; as to believe, repent, &c. So that the Reasons why so many oppose this Truth, must be either Ignorance of it, or Prejudice against it.

1. Ignorance of it; Not for Want of a clear Revelation of it, but for Want of true Knowledge of what is revealed: Some are unable to read, others unable to understand what they read: Many will not allow themselves Time to search into these deep Myſteries. Satan has no ſmall Hand in this, he blinds the Minds of them that believe not; he knows he can eaſily take away what is not underſtood, *Matt. xiii. 19.* And tho' many are thus ignorant, yet, as proud as ignorant, they think none know more than they, when few know leſs. We live in a Day of glorious Goſpel-Light, but ſome will not receive it. They are ſaid to cloſe their Eyes, leſt they ſhould ſee with their Eyes, and underſtand with their Hearts; and often put Darkneſs for Light, and Light for Darkneſs. And by Reaſon of this Ignorance, many affright themſelves with their own Fancies: Like a Man that dreams he is ſinking into the Sea, and ſtarts as if it was really ſo; but when he awakes, ſees it was but a Dream. So many affright themſelves with ſuch Ideas of God's Decrees, as have no Truth in them. Oh! ſay ſome, What a dreadful Doctrine is this, to ſay that God has abſolutely decreed to damn the greateſt Part of the World, yea tho' ever ſo holy; and ſtand amaz'd at it, and entering a Proteſt againſt it: And well they may, ſince there is not a Word of Truth in it.

2. This is owing to a natural Prejudice againſt this Truth; they are wilfully ignorant, and deſire not the Knowledge of God's Ways. There are Two Sorts of People implacably ſet againſt this Truth, the Profane, and the Self-Righteous; and I fear when theſe are taken out of the World, but few will be left in it: No Wonder then that this Truth hath but few Friends.

1. The profane Part of the World, who are to every good Work reprobate, who are Lovers of Pleaſure more than Lovers of God, who have even ſold themſelves to do wickedly, theſe don't love this Doctrine; and indeed know not how they ſhould, for it never ſpeaks well of them: And if I miſtake not, the greateſt Oppoſers of this Truth ſeldom are the cloſeſt Walkers with God. Theſe think if but a Remnant be ſaved, what will become of them! having Reaſon to think that if any periſh,

they are like to be the Men: But if they can but bring themselves into the Belief that all the World stand equally capable of Salvation, and may be saved if they will, they flatter themselves that they shall pass in so vast a Crowd; being heartily willing not to go to Hell, and as desirous to die the Death of the Righteous as that Witch *Balaam* was, tho' in the mean time they have not Ability or Will to do any Thing necessary in order to Salvation.

2. The Self-Righteous Man, he don't like this Doctrine, it will not suit with his Ends; he is for getting to Heaven by his good Deeds, and instead of coming in by the Door, is for climbing up to Heaven some other Way: But this lays Man in the Dust, and attributes our Salvation to the free Grace of God. *Rom. xi. 5. Even so then at this present Time also there is a Remnant, according to the Election of Grace.* This shews us how we were chosen to Salvation before we had done any Good, and that good Works flow from Election, but are no Cause of it. This shews how the Kingdom that God brings any to was prepared before the Foundation of the World: And this Doctrine will not down with them. They are for coming in as Partners with the Father, Son, and Spirit in what concerns our Salvation: They will not consent that the Father should chuse any to Salvation, but on the Forefight of good Works as the Cause thereof: Nor will they consent that Christ should redeem any but upon Conditions wrought by a Creature-Power, without the Performance of which the dear Price he paid will be in vain, and so give the greatest Honour to the Creature: The Scripture tells us, That Christ looked and there was none to help, and of the People there was none with him. *Isaiab lxxiii. 3, 5.* Yea, They are for coming in as Partners with the Spirit in the Work of Sanctification, in that when we have done all we can, he is obliged to do the rest; tho' this Wind blows only where it listeth.

Thus Men stand snarling at the Truth on the one Hand, and on the other, both agreeing to oppose the Sovereign Grace of God; and to cloak their mischievous Designs, pretend all is in Favour of the Justice and Righteousness of God: And so plead wickedly for God, How needful

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bring then is it to establish this Doctrine, that so many are throwing down with both Hands?

Says the Apostle in the Text, *Is there Unrighteousness with God? God forbid.* Which Words seem equally to refer to the Chusing of *Jacob*, and Rejecting of *Esau*: And since the Righteousness of God is equally reflected on in both these by some, I shall not only vindicate these Truths, but clear the Righteousness of God in both: Tho' God doth not want us to clear him, he'll clear himself one Day. 'Tis unreasonable to call God to the Bar of Human Reason, who giveth not Account of any of his Matters; 'tis enough to know 'tis his Will: For who shall say unto him, What doest Thou? If it is thought Presumption to call Kings to Account, *Eccles. viii. 4.* how much more to call him to Account who is King of Kings, and that cannot err? I shall therefore consult the Word of God, and rest there; since That in the Great Day will be Judge not only of our Actions what are good or evil, but of our Opinions what are sound and what not sound: And tho' some Things therein are hard to be understood, yet I shall explain these by such as are more easie.

In speaking to these deep Things, I begin with God's Decree of Saving some; for it is first said, *Jacob have I loved*: And one would wonder that any should be offended at this; what angry with God for saving some, and not leaving the whole World to perish! Some may say, they are not angry that God chose some, but because he chose but some. Now, in order to the setting Things in a clear Light, I shall

I. State the Doctrine of Election in several Propositions.

II. Clear the Righteousness of God herein, by answering Objections.

III. Shew how the contrary Doctrine casts as dark Reflections on the Righteousness of God, and much darker; and unavoidably leads to such Opinions as are utterly repugnant to Scripture.

IV. Apply this First Branch, and then proceed to the second; namely, to clear the Righteousness of God in not Electing of some; yea, in Damning of others, and in Damning of all that are not Elected.

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And I hope you will read, and then judge; and not do as *Jehudi* did by that Roll that was wrote by the express Command of God, who, when he had read but Three or Four Leaves, cast the Whole into the Fire till all was consum'd, *Jer.* xxxvi. 2, 3, 22, 23. But tho' he had Power to cut and burn the Roll, he had not Power to make void the Mind of God revealed therein: For when God had threaten'd him for his Sin in so doing, v. 29, 30. 'tis said v. 32. *Then took Jeremiah another Roll, and gave it to Baruch the Scribe, the Son of Neriah, who wrote therein from the Mouth of Jeremiah all the Words of the Book which Jehoiakim King of Judah had burnt in the Fire, and there were added besides unto them many like Words.* Men get nothing by opposing God or his Truths.

But some who are no Enemies to this Truth may say, O do not medle with these Things, these are deep Mysteries. Answer, I grant they are so; but if Truths, they ought to be understood: Did God reveal these for Nothing? Is not all Scripture profitable? Is it consistent with our Souls Safety to be ignorant of the Foundation of our Happiness? Shall the Enemies to Truth have more to say against it, than the Friends to Truth have to say for it? Shall the Angels desire to look into these Things, and shall we shut our Eyes against the Light, who are more especially concern'd to know them, as we have a special Interest in them? Do not we see what Advantage *Satan* takes over Souls by their Ignorance of this very Truth, and but few escape this Snare? Perhaps I have once been in as much Danger of splitting on this Rock, as any of my Readers can be; but having thro' Grace escaped, and being made to see that to be a sure Foundation Stone, that had like to have been a Stone of Stumbling and Rock of Offence, I am willing to hang out all the Light I can to prevent the Ruin of others. Sure I am, this Doctrine cannot be so offensive to some, but it is as comfortable to others; that which is as Gall to some, is sweeter than the Honey-Comb to others: They that can by Faith see their Interest in it, cannot but have a dear Love for it. Hence Christ had his Disciples rejoice that their Names were written in Heaven, rather than that the Devils were subject to them, *Luke* x. 20.

I own these are deep Things ; but the Apostle tells us, *1 Cor. ii. 10. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit ; for the Spirit searcheth all Things ; yea, the deep Things of God :* And in the same Verse adds, *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.* And yet after all the Scrutiny we can make, we shall have Cause to cry out, *Oh, the Depth !* And as the Wisest of Men, *This only have I found.* But if we may but know these Things savingly, and so far as to defend ourselves from Satan, and those Truths from the Reflections cast on them by the World, I hope we shall not think our Labour lost.

I confess I have very awful Thoughts of this Mystery, nor have I rashly entered hereon ; what I have written is the Effect of Thirty Years Study, and I hope my Reader will take as much Time to consider before he denies what I have herein laid down : As I dare not rashly receive any Thing as an Article of my Faith, so I see no Cause to be ashamed of any Thing that the Scripture proves to be a Truth, though ever so far above the Reach of Reason, since Reason ought to submit to Divine Revelation : *Rom. ix. 20. Nay, but who art thou that repliest against God ?* So as to contradict God, as the Word signifies. So in *Isaiah xlv. 9. Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker : Let the Potsherds strive with the Potsherds of the Earth :* As if he had said, if Men will dispute with each other, let 'em ; but at their Peril be it, if they strive with me. This setting up of Reason above Divine Revelation, oh, what Mischief hath it lately done ! If nothing must be believ'd but what Reason can comprehend, the Articles of our Faith must be reduc'd to a small Number ; we must then leave out of our Creed not only the Divinity of Christ, but also the Doctrine of Regeneration, tho' so necessary to Salvation ; since our Lord tells us, *The Wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the Sound thereof ; but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth :* So is every one that is born of the Spirit, Verse 9. *Nicodemus answered, and said unto him, How can these Things be ?* Now shall we reject that Truth, because a learned Nicodemus could not reach it ; or believe it, because our Lord hath so solemnly affirmed

med it: At this Rate we must not believe what we see with our Eyes; namely, that God hath wrought any Works in the World: Since it is said, *Eccles. xi. 5. Even so thou knowest not the Works of God, who maketh all.* Nay, I cannot see by this Rule but we must deny the Being of God, as well as his Works, since we cannot tell how he came to have a Being: *Job xi. 7, 8, 9. Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to Perfection? It is as high as Heaven, What canst thou do? Deeper than Hell, What canst thou know? &c.* The Apostle speaking of these Things is brought in, saying, *What shall we say to these Things?* Rom. viii. 30, 31. But tho' he had not Learning and Wisdom enough fully to comprehend them, he had more Grace than to deny them: The harder Things are to be understood, the more Pains we ought to take to know them. Say then, What God has reveal'd, I will believe; tho' as far above my Reason, as the Heavens are above the Earth: He is a God of Truth, and the Judgment of God is always according to Truth; but I am at best but a Man, and by Reason of Sin have my Understanding darkned.

Yet after all that I have said against Reason being set above Divine Revelation, I shall not deliver any Thing contrary to Reason; for tho' God acts in a Way of Sovereignty, yet he appeals to Man to judge of the Equity of his Proceedings, and proceeds in such a Method that all Mouths may be stopped; and such as perish render'd inexcusable: As he that wanted the Wedding Garment was Speechless when asked, *How camest thou in hither?* So in the Great Day all that perish, whether profess'd Christians or Pagans, will have no more to say than he. The Righteousness of God will then be cleared, while the Ruin of the Wicked will then be charged upon themselves. The Judge will then say, *O Sinner, thou hast destroy'd thyself, Hos. xiii. 9.* and thy Ways and thy Doings have procured this Misery to thyself. The Sinner will then acquit God, and say, *O Lord, Thou hast judged righteously.*

And as the Destruction of the Non-Elect will then be charged upon themselves, and not on the Decrees of God, so the Salvation of the Elect will be wholly attributed to the

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the free Grace of God; the Creature will then be laid in the Dust, and the Lord alone exalted in that Day: Then all the subtil Winding and Turnings of Men, whereby they have endeavour'd to obscure this Grace, will be unravell'd, and detected. And to these Concessions I shall have an Eye thro' the Whole of this ensuing Discourse, and hope I shall not be left to speak any Thing that is inconsistent hereunto; and so long as I build on these two Foundation-Stones, I trust that the Gates of Hell shall never so far prevail as to demolish the Building: And if any Man speak not according hereunto, I can't but judge it is because there is no Light in him, but under strong Delusions. These Things being premis'd, I come now to the Propositions.

Proposition I. God did from Eternity, or before all Time, elect Some to everlasting Life: Not All, but Some out of All. Some that cannot deny Election, do yet deny it to be from Eternity; and affirm it is only in Time, *i. e.* when Man believes, and repents: But this is to make us chuse God, rather than God to chuse us. I grant we read of some chosen in Time; but this was not a chusing to Salvation, but to Office, since one of them so chosen is said to have a Devil, *John vi. 70.* But if we do read of chusing any in Time to bring them to Heaven, it must be understood in Subordination, and not in Opposition to our being chosen from Eternity; and to be no more than executing what God before had decreed: Nor is it possible to reconcile such Scriptures (if any such) any other Way. To say we first chuse God is to make our Salvation depend on the Creature, and is utterly repugnant to Scripture: 'Tis said *Rom. ix. 11. For the Children being not yet born, nor having done any Good, &c.* What can be clearer? When *Jacob*, who was an Example of God's chusing others, was beloved, and elected, he was not born, and so could not chuse God: And 'tis farther added, he had not done any, not the least Good; and therefore could not believe, or repent, for so to do is to do Good, if any Thing is good: If good Works are the Effect of Election, and flow from it, as Scripture fully proves, then they cannot be the Cause thereof.

The Scripture carries Things much higher, and resolves all in the Sovereign Grace of God in chusing before the World began; *Tit. i. 2. In Hope of eternal Life, which God, that cannot Lie, promised before the World began*, i. e. to Christ as the Head of the Elect: *So Matt. xxv. 34. Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you before the Foundation of the World.* Now, How was it prepared; but as purposed and decreed in the eternal Counsel of God? I confess some that agree in this, have differing Sentiments as to what Consideration God chose us under; whether with Reference to that State of Sin and Misery that God must needs foresee, or consider'd us merely as Creatures; and here we may soon lose ourselves: But as this may seem hard to determine, so it doth not seem so necessary to be known. With humble Submission to better Judgments I must own I am inclin'd to the former, as that which most magnifies his Grace towards us: The lower Man was, the greater was the Grace of God in chusing him. Considering Man merely as a Creature, so he was unworthy of such a Favour. But considering him as a lost Sinner, and a Rebel, so he was much more unworthy. It is greater Grace to bring us to Heaven now fallen, then it would have been to have saved *Adam* or us had we never fallen: And that which further inclines me to this is, that this is attributed to the Mercy, as well as to the Love of God: *Rom. ix. 15. For he saith to Moses, I will have Mercy on whom I will have Mercy, &c.* Now the Object of Mercy is one miserable. And further, God could not but foresee the Fall of Man, and how this should be out of his Mind is strange: had not God consider'd this, What Need was there to send his Son? Christ tells us in one Place, he came to do the Will of his Father; and in another Place, that he came to save Sinners, and such as were lost; not to prevent them only from sinning, but to save them when they had sinned: Which seems to me clearly to prove under what Consideration God made over his Elect to Christ. Some tell us he did it for the Glory of his Son, and gave the Elect as a Spouse to Christ; but the Scripture nowhere only attributes this to the Glory of Christ, but also to the Glory of his Grace towards us: *Eph. i. 4, 5, 6. And*

as I cannot conceive of any higher Glory that Christ was capable of receiving than what he had as he was God, Equal with the Father, so neither did he ask any greater when he had finished his Work; *John xvii. 4, 5. I have glorified thee on the Earth; I have finished the Work which thou gavest me to do: And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine ownself, with the Glory which I had with thee before the World was:* Christ can't be more happy and blessed than he was before he came into the World, and would have been had he never come into it. And tho' I confess, by Reason of his undertaking this Work of Redemption, he will receive Praise, and Honour, from his Redeemed Ones; yet seeing he needs none of their Praise, I conclude he had something else in View in undertaking to save the Elect: If not, it tends to lower our Esteem of him, and what he has done; since he did not herein aim at our Good, but at his own Glory. But against what hath been said under this Head, when God chose his Elect, it may be objected thus: That Man could not be elected, before he had a Being: All Accidents suppose a Subject in Being to receive them; a Man cannot be a rich Man, till he is a Man: So to say any are elected, supposes them to be, or else God chose mere Nothings. To this I answer, This Difficulty will soon be cleared, by inquiring into the true Nature of Election as set forth in Scripture; namely, as a Purpose of what Good God will in Time bestow: And this may be call'd a Decree, to shew the Firmness and Unalterableness of that Purpose. When we say we purpose to build a House, it doth not suppose the House is built, but the Contrary: Now God expresses this to be a Purpose, *2 Tim. i. 9. According to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the World began:* So *Ephes. i. 9. Having made known to us the Mystery of his Will, according to his good Pleasure which he purposed in himself:* As Legacies may be bequeathed to Children that shall be, as well as to such as have a Being. And herein is a great Difference between Election and Justification: The former consists in a Purpose of doing Good to such as were not in Being; the latter is an Act of God passing upon

the Creature in Being, and is never said (as I remember) to be a Purpose, but the Effect of a Purpose; and is distinct from Election, both as to the Time and Nature of the Thing. Hence 'tis said, *Rom. viii. 30. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: And whom he called, them he also justified: And whom he justified, them he also glorified.* Mind, here is Predestination set first, as the Spring of all our Blessedness; then follows our Calling, Justification, and Glorification, to shew the Certainty of the Things: But to suppose our Justification to bear even Date with our Election, hath no more of Truth than our Calling and Glorification do the same.

Proposition II. God did from Eternity elect a certain Number of certain Persons. I have shown *When* God chose, I am now to shew *Whom* he chose; and tho' I cannot tell the Persons, yet we learn from Scripture they were a certain Number, tho' unknown to us, yet well known to God: Here was nothing uncertain as to the Number, or Persons number'd; neither depended on the mutable Will of Man, but both on the immutable Counsel of God: This Number was more certain than that *Acts iv. 4. And the Number of the Men was about Five Thousand:* So certain was this Number, that as no One of them could be lost, so not One could be added thereunto: Hence, when the Mother of Zebedee's Children requested of Christ that her Two Sons might sit the one on his Right-Hand, the other on his Left, in his Kingdom; he answer'd, *Matt. xx. 23. 'Tis not mine to give, but it shall be given for whom it is prepared of my Father:* To shew that Christ, as Mediator, could not add one Soul to the Elect. This is further cleared as to the Certainty of the Number, from *Luke xv. 4. What Man of you having an Hundred Sheep, if he lose One of them, doth not leave the Ninety and Nine in the Wilderness, and goeth after that which was lost, until he find it? Verse 5. And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his Shoulders rejoicing:* This Hundred Sheep represent the Elect: But why such Joy at the finding that one Sheep? Because if that had not been found, all the rest had been

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lost: Christ's Accounts to his Father would not have pass'd, if One of his Elect had been wanting. Hence he saith, *John x. 14. I know my Sheep; Verse 16. and other Sheep I have, which are not of this Fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my Voice: So John xvii. 6. And I have manifested thy Name to the Men which thou gavest me out of the World; thine they were, and thou gavest them me: They were the Father's by Election, and Christ's by Redemption, and the Number was equally the same; the Father did not elect one more than the Son redeem'd, nor did Christ redeem one more than the Father elected: Verse 10. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine. And when our Lord was going to his Father, he saith, John xvii. 12. Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the Son of Perdition; i. e. he whom thou never didst design to save.*

And as the Number is certain, so the Persons are as certain; the Elect were not like a Company of Soldiers, if some die, others make up the Number, and the Captain may make up his Number of any: 'Tis not so here, God chose Persons, not Qualifications. Says Christ, *Luke x. 20. But rather rejoice, because your Names are written in Heaven. John x. 3. He calleth his own Sheep by Name. Phil. iv. 3. With Clement also, and with the other my Fellow Labourers, whose Names are in the Book of Life. God told Moses, he knew him by that Name; and the same Knowledge hath God of all his Chosen Ones. To illustrate this; a Parent going a Journey, commits a certain Number of Children to the Care of a Steward: Now suppose at his Return the Steward brings in the same Number of Children, but not the same Children; Would this satisfy such a Parent? No, he would say, Where are my dear Children? As for these, they are none of mine. No more will God take others in the Room of his Chosen Ones.*

Proposition III. This certain Number of certain Persons thus chosen [from Eternity,] were [absolutely chosen;] *Rom. ix. 16. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth Mercy:* Here

Here is Man with all his Endeavours wholly shut out. So *Eph. i. 5. Having predestinated us unto the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good Pleasure of his Will.* You see how Predestination stands purely on the good Pleasure of God: He saw nothing out of himself to move him to love us: 'Tis attributed to his Grace, which it could not be if any Thing in Man moved him hereunto: Here I shall shew it was not any Thing done or to be done by Christ, or done or foreseen to be done by us, that moved God to love and chuse us, but all is owing to his good Pleasure.

1. It was not on Account of any Thing done or to be done by Christ, as is clear from *John iii. 16. For God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son:* You see it was Love in God that moved him to give his Son: Christ's coming was the Effect, not the Cause of the Father's Love: God chose Christ as the Means to bring about his Ends: So that tho' his Righteousness was the Cause of our Justification, &c. yet not of our Election or God's Love, which was the Cause thereof: That sprung from Sovereign Grace. 2. Nor was this for any Good done by us; nothing can act before it doth exist: *Jacob* was loved before he had done any Good. 3. Lastly of all have we Reason to think it was for good Works foreseen, tho' so strenuously urged by some. God was not so in love with the best Works of a sinful Creature, as to fall in love with him at the Foresight of 'em at so great a Distance; or to bestow so great a Priviledge upon him: He that speaks so contemptuously of them when done, could not be so pleased with them when only foreseen: Besides, God foresaw no good Works to be done, but such as in his Love he determin'd should be done. The Instance of *Jacob* and *Esau* confirms the Point in Hand: *Jacob* seem'd unlike to have got the Blessing, having Lived to obtain it; and being conscious to himself of his Sin, fear'd he should get a Curse instead of a Blessing: *Gen. xvii. 12.* On the other Hand, *Esau* comes with Tears to entreat for a Blessing, yet could not prevail: *Heb. xii. 17. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the Blessing, he was rejected: For he found no Place for Repentance, (i. e. in his Father)*

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tho' he sought it carefully with Tears; which was not in Favour of *Jacob's Lie*, nor in Contempt of *Esaú's Tears*, but to shew how God's Purposes shall take Place; and that neither the real Evil of some, nor seeming Good of others, should make any Change in the Mind of God towards such as he loved or hated.

Now because many are so fond of this Opinion, that good Works foreseen moved God to love and chuse, I shall endeavour that there may not be left one Stone upon another of this *Babel*, (whose Heighth is design'd to reach to Heaven) that may not be thrown down, and do hope hereby that their Language will be confounded.

We have a lively Emblem of God's Proceedings of this Nature in *Gen. iv. 4.* *And the Lord had Respect to Abel, and to his Offering*; first to his Person, then to his Work: So, God first loves the Persons of his Elect, before he has any Love to or Delight in their Works. God's accepting the Offering of *Abel* rather than that of *Cain*, was not owing to the Dignity of his Person, for both had the same Parents; nor as a Birth-Right Privilege, for so *Cain* might have expected it as the First-born; nor on the Account of the Excellency of the Offering, for *Cain's* Offering, the Fruit of the Ground, might be worth as much as *Abel's* Firstling of his Flock; for tho' he is said to offer to God a more excellent Offering than *Cain*, yet that which made it so was his Faith; *Heb. xi. 4.* Nor was it owing to the Time of offering, for so *Cain* was before *Abel*; but God shew'd thereby the Freeness of Sovereign Grace.

But to speak more plain to the Point in Hand, there can be no such Thing as a good Work, where there was not an antecedent Love in God to the Persons working, making good Works in an Evangelical Sense; those to whom there is no Love in God, will never receive a Principle of Life from God to be implanted in them: Can we suppose that ever God will bestow such valuable Blessings as Grace and Faith on such as he has no Love to? Yet without these no good Works can be done: God's Love to us is the Cause of all true Sanctification, as to the Root or Branches of it, as is clear from *Eph. ii. 2, 3, 4, 5.* Observe, he first sets forth their Natural State,

State, *dead in Trespasses and Sins*; then he shews what their Walk was, *according to the Course of this World, according to the Prince of the Power of the Air*, i. e. as Men and Devils would have them walk; he then shews this was not only the State of those *Ephesians*, for says he, *among whom we all had our Conversations*, &c. he then comes to shew how they were delivered from that sad State, and that it was the Work of God so to do, *you hath he quicken'd*; he then shews what moved God, and tells us it was owing to *his great Love wherewith he loved them*; he then shews when this Love was fixed on them, and that he did not deferr it till he quickned them, (much less till they had quicken'd themselves) but when dead in Sins there was a great Love to them antecedent to their Quickning that moved God thereunto: God is said to love us *freely*, surely then not for any Works done, much less for such Works as never are or can be done. We have another Text that gives Light into this Matter, *Deut. vii. 6, 7, 8.* *Moses* owns they were a holy People to the Lord, *ver. 6.* he comes to shew how they came to be so, namely, because the Lord had chosen them to be a Special People to himself, *ver. 8.* he then shews what moved God to chuse them, and sanctifie them, and lets them know it was not their Greatness nor Goodness that moved him, but his Love; he then comes to shew why he loved them, and chose them; namely, because he would love them, *ver. 7 and 8 compared*: Once more, *1 John iv. 19.* *We love him, because he first loved us.* 'Tis as true of all other Graces, we believe, we repent, because he first loved us; and never should we have believed, or repented, or performed any Duty in a right Manner, if he had not first loved us: I grant there may be an Outside of Duty done by such as have no Interest in this special Love of God to them, or any sincere Love to God in them; but those differ as much from true Evangelical Obedience, as a well-drawn Picture, or the dead Carcass of a Man differs from a living Man: For tho' the former may have all the visible Parts of a Man, yet there is no Life in any of those Parts. The best Works of a carnal Man are dead Works, the Man is in a dead State, and his Works are dead, and can be no other;

other; and that not only such as are materially Evil, but even such as have the greatest Shew of Goodness. God is so far from loving the Performances of carnal Men, that he is said to hate and loath them; as is clear from *Isa. i. 11, 12, 13, 14. Prov. xv. 8. Isa. lxvi. 3, 4.* And how unlikely and even impossible is it that such Performances, even on the Foresight of them, should procure an Interest in God's electing Love, and those inestimable Benefits flowing therefrom: These seem much more likely to have prevented it, than to procure it; if any Thing done by the Creature could have so done: But he has Compassion on whom he will have Compassion. As our best Deeds foreseen could not procure it, so neither could our worst Deeds prevent it when foreseen, or remove it when done. I can scarce conceive what Ideas such can form of God, or Gospel-Grace, who deny this grand Truth; since they make God a Debtor to the Creature. There is Nothing we are more naturally prone unto, than to think our good Deeds procure God's Love to our Persons; and never so much as when we do Nothing well: But the Grace of God working in us a deep Sense of our Unworthiness, will be the most effectual Cure for this Malady: And till then 'tis no Wonder to see Souls feeding on Ashes, with a Lie in their Right-Hand.

The Sum of what I am aiming at under this Head is, that it could not be any Works done, or foreseen, that moved God to love or chuse any; because all good Works flow from electing Love, and also because there can be no such Thing as a good Work done by such as God did not first love: And to shew that where there is no Love in God to us, nor Love to God wrought by the Spirit of God in us, we can neither perform any Duty in a spiritual Manner, nor can a Holy God delight in the best Service such can do.

Proposition IV. All that are thus Elected, shall [certainly be Saved.] As they were chosen to that End, so they shall surely obtain it. This Grace of God can't be frustrated; his Decrees, as well as his Gifts, are without Repentance; like the Laws of the *Medes*, which alter not.

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And so long as his Decree is firm, the Thing decreed is sure. Hence *Rom. viii. 30.* Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified; i. e. All them, not One of them shall be lost. *John xvii. 12.* So *1 Pet. i. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.* Whom Christ calls, them he will save. Says our Lord, *John x. 27, 28, 29.* They are his Sheep, given to Christ by his Father; and he that gave them, and he that receiv'd them, are both engaged to secure them: No Corruption from within, nor Temptation from without, shall keep them from what God has decreed for them. The Foundation of God stands sure, which is this; *The Lord knoweth them that are his, 2 Tim. ii. 19.* Nor are the Elect that are called only sure to be Saved on this Account, but also such as are uncall'd; tho' they cannot attain to the Assurance of it in that State, the Thing is secured Above: Not that they shall be saved in that State; no, but he that chose them before Time, will sooner or later call them in Time, and bring them out of that State. *John vi. 37.* All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me; and he that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. Mind, they are sure to come unto Christ, because given to him; and as sure to be received by Christ when they do come. Those other Sheep not yet call'd he must bring. As Judah became Surety to bring back Joseph, *Gen. xlii. 9.* I will be Surety for him, of my Hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not to thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the Blame for ever. Christ must see all his Elect forthcoming, or he must bear the Blame for ever. Neither the Devil, nor the World, nor Sin, shall be able to hinder the conquering Grace of God, when his Time of Love is come. God sometimes suffers his Elect to go far, and live long in Sin, yet will at last make them nigh. *Saul* was a Persecutor, a Blasphemer, and Injurious, but he received Mercy; Grace found him out, and says God, *Acts ix. 15.* He is a Chosen Vessel unto me. As Christ says, *Luke xiii. 33.* For it cannot be that a Prophet perish out of Jerusalem. So a Soul cannot perish out of the Number of the Elect. As the Father prepared the Kingdom for them, and the

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Son purchased it for them, So who shall hinder them from possessing it? This Twofold Cord can't be broken. As Sin foreseen could not prevent God from Chusing them, so no Sin committed shall prevent his Calling and Saving them: He knows how to love the Persons of his Elect, even in a sinful State, and yet hate their Sin. If any should abuse this Truth, and take the more Freedom in Sin, yet the Truths of God must not be conceal'd, much less denied, to prevent it, lest the Remedy prove worse than the Disease.

Objection. Some are said to be blotted out of God's Book, *Exod. xxxii. 23. And the Lord said unto Moses, whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my Book:* And can such be saved?

Answer. It is also said *Rev. iii. 5. And I will not blot out his Name out of the Book of Life.* Now, How must we reconcile these? Not by saying some of the Elect may perish, and others not: For tho' such a Turn might please some, and reconcile these Scriptures, yet 'tis impossible to reconcile such a Sense to the Scriptures have named.

To clear this therefore, consider there is a Twofold Book of Life; one is as to the Life of the Body, *Deuteronomy xxix. 20. And all the Curses that are written in this Book shall lie upon him; and the Lord shall blot out his Name from under Heaven,* i. e. he should remain no longer among the Living. Now when *Moses* desir'd God to blot out his Name, we can hardly think that he desir'd to be damn'd; but only to die, or rather to be dead: As if he had said, Lord, I see how this People have sinned, and what Judgments are like to befall them; and if Thou wilt not pardon them by diverting those Judgments, take me out of this World: For how can I bear to see the Destruction of my People? Let me therefore be taken from them, so shall I be happy, tho' they are miserable. A Second Book of Life may be as to the Soul, and out of this Book touching the Salvation of the Soul, never any Name was blotted out that was once written therein. Yet this we may say, that as he that is blotted out of any Book, has not his Name there; so if God threatens to blot out any Name out of the Book

of Life, in this latter Sense, 'tis as much as to say, it shall never be found there: Not that it once was there, but to shew it shall not be found there. In either of these Senses, the Doctrine I am confirming stands untouched; for who questions but Saints may die, yea, desire to be dead: On the other Hand, who questions but Sinners may die eternally; tho' I much rather close with the former Sense, as most agreeable to the Scope of that fore-named Text, nor do I remember such another in the Bible.

Proposition V. As God thus absolutely decreed to save some, so he also [decreed the Means necessary in order thereunto,] and effectually to enable all that he purposed to save to come up unto the same: As there are Means appointed as necessary to obtain the End of our Election, so these Means are as absolutely determin'd to be wrought in the Elect as their Election itself was: Nor can the End be obtained without the Means, nor the Means finally separated from the End: And to think otherwise, is to reflect on the infinite Wisdom of God in choosing to be knew-not what; seeing his Ends might be or might not be obtained. God appointed Regeneration, Faith, and Holiness, as necessary to come in between Election and our Salvation; not as Causes of the one or of the other, nor yet to be performed by our Power, but only as a Means he saw good to appoint. God seems to speak thus: I am resolved to display my Grace in Saving a Remnant out of a lost World; and I do resolve to save them in a Way of Believing, &c. And I do as positively and absolutely resolve to work all these Things in them by the Sovereign Agency of my Spirit. God doth not seem to say, they shall do these Things or perish, but they shall be enabled to do these Things, and not perish. Hence you have all these Things necessary to be done attributed to the Spirit of God, not as a Co-worker with the Creature, but alone, and in an absolute Manner, and that pursuant to the Decree of God with Reference hereunto. And since so much of the Grace of God appears herein, and so much of our Comfort depends hereon, I shall confirm it to you.

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1. God hath appointed Regeneration as necessary to Salvation. *John iii. 3. Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God:* And as this is necessary, so 'tis the Work of God, *ver. 5. Born of the Spirit:* So *John i. 13. Who were born not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God:* Nor is this only the Work of God, but a Work absolutely wrought without any previous Preparations, or Qualifications to assist him herein, or to move him hereunto, *ver. 8. The Wind bloweth where it listeth;* and to shew we contribute no more towards this new Birth, than we do towards the Blowing of the Wind: And as all the World can neither raise the Wind nor hinder it, no more can we further or hinder this Work of God in the Soul; the Soul being as passive in the Reception of the first Principle of Spiritual Life, (except to oppose it) as the Body was when the Soul was at first infused into it. Nor is this only a Work of God's Sovereignty, but wrought in us pursuant to our Election; as *1 Pet. i. 2, 3. Elect according to the Foreknowledge of God the Father, &c. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant Mercy hath begotten us again, &c.*

2. God hath appointed Faith as necessary to Salvation. God hath declared *Mark xvi. 16. He that believes not, shall be damn'd:* And as this is necessary, so it is God that works it; *John vi. 29. This is the Work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent:* And as he works it, so he works it absolutely in the Elect; for tho' God may work this by Hearing, yet that Hearing is not left as a Thing uncertain: Tho' our Hearing such Ministers may seem accidental to us, yet it was not so to God. For as God made Choice of *Peter* to preach to the *Gentiles*, that by his Mouth they should believe, *Acts xv. 7.* so he must as necessarily determine they should hear him, or how could they believe by his Means: And what strange Providences may we oft observe in Ministers preaching, and in Sinners hearing, only to bring about the secret Purposes of God; and how ineffectual are the best Means to work Faith, if God doth not bless those Means. And as this Faith is absolutely wrought

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by the Spirit, so it is wrought pursuant to the Decree or Purpose of Election, as *1 Tir. i. 1. According to the Faith of God's Elect*, i. e. that Faith that is peculiar to the Elect: *Acts xiii. 48. And as many as were ordained to eternal Life believed*; exactly so many, and no more: Never did an Elect Soul perish for Want of Faith: Their Election hath as much secured their Faith, as their Salvation: Let the Disputers stand forth and prove the contrary if they are able.

3. God hath appointed Holiness as necessary to Eternal Happiness. *Heb. xii. 14. Without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord*: And as it is necessary, so all true Sanctification is wrought in us by the Spirit, and we depend on him for the right Performance of every Duty. Hence stiled his Workmanship, *Eph. ii. 10. Yea he works the Spring of Obedience*, absolutely without any Assistance from us, or Worthiness in us: Hence this is call'd a Creating us to good Works, towards which Man contributes nothing. Nor do we less depend on the Sovereign Agency of the Spirit, for the right Performance of each particular Duty. As we are Men we may do Natural Actions, as Christians we may perform Spiritual Duties, but 'tis only by the Aid of the Spirit that we can perform them in a Spiritual Manner. How dull and lifeless are Saints in Duty, if the Spirit doth not quicken us? How straitened in Prayer, if he doth not help our Infirmities? How unprofitable in Hearing, if he teach us not? How little Light do we see sometime in those Scriptures, which at other times even dazle our Eyes? What Saint is there but must set to his Seal, that this is true? And to come close to the Point, he doth all this pursuant to Election; in that he works these Things in and for them, and none but them: Hence the Apostle not only saith we are his Workmanship; but adds, which God had before ordained that we should walk in them. So *Ephesians i. 4. According as he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy*, &c. *2 Thes. ii. 13. From all which it is evident that the Means were decreed as well as the End, and that God determin'd to work those Means as absolutely as he chose us.*

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But before I can finish this Proposition, I shall endeavour to answer a Question that may arise from what has been spoken.

Quest. Seeing God has decreed not only the Salvation of a certain Number, but the Means by Divine Appointment conducing thereunto, without which they cannot be saved, What must we think of that Part of them that die in Infancy, who seem incapable of Faith, and under a seeming Impossibility to get to Heaven without it: Their Election seems to initle them to Heaven, being chosen thereunto, and yet the Want of Faith seems to shut the Door against them to keep them out?

Ans. Now tho' some perhaps that never had Children, or never buried any in Infancy, may think it a Question better let alone than inquired into, yet if they have precious Souls they must be worth inquiring after; and I can scarce think it consistent with that Parental Affection that Saints bear to their Children, no nor with true Sanctity, for any to bury Children in Infancy, and have no Concern as to their Eternal State: Such as so greatly loved them when living, and so greatly bewail'd them when dead, must needs have some Concern for their Souls, if any for their own; to think where they are, whether happy or miserable, whether with *Lazarus* in *Abraham's* Bosom, or with *Dives* tormented in those Flames: For I know no Medium between these. Nor ought we to indulge ourselves with any Hope of their Eternal Happiness, till we can find some Ground in Scripture to fix those Hopes upon: 'Tis daring Presumption to bury such in sure and certain Hope of Eternal Life as die in Sin, without any Sign of Repentance for it, since such Hopes have no other Foundation but that God will be false to his Word: But let God be True, and all that oppose him Liers.

I shall therefore endeavour to get what Light I can from Scripture into this Matter, and think we are bound to submit thereunto, whatever Reason may say to the contrary. And that I may bring the Question into as narrow a Compass as may be, I shall suppose, and even take it for granted, that Infants can never get to Heaven without Faith; And such as deny this, would do well to

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tell us of some other Way of their getting to Heaven, or give 'em all over as lost; and not overthrow other Mens Opinions, and oppose even Scripture itself, and not confirm their own, as *Hereticks* did of old. Will any say their being *Elected* will *Save* them? I answer, This is to break in upon the Decrees of God, and separate the Means from the End: There is as much Ground to hope they may be saved tho' not elected, as to hope that their being elected will save them without Faith. Or will any say they are *Saved* by Vertue of that Price of Redemption paid by Christ for them, and his Righteousness imputed to them? But let such know, Christ purchased our Faith as much as our Salvation: Nor can any lay Claim to his Righteousness, or take any Comfort in it, or receive any saving Blessings from it, that have no Faith: For 'tis said *Romans* iii. 22, 23. *Even the Righteousness of God which is by Faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no Difference: To shew there is but one Way of this Righteousness being put upon us, and that is Faith: And whether Jew or Gentile, Rich or Poor, Old or Young, there is no Difference. And farther, What will such say to such Scriptures as exclude all Unbelievers from Heaven, such as John iii. 36? He that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life; but the Wrath of God abideth on him: It is on him, and will abide on him, if he believe not. Yea tho' the Father had given all Things into his Son's Hand to fit him for a Saviour, and even the Elect themselves, yet such as never believe in him shall not receive any of those all Things from his Hand that he received from the Father, they being given to him to be communicated only to such as should believe. So *Heb.* iii. 11, 19. *And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his Rest, but to them that believed not? So we see they could not enter in because of Unbelief: To shew, that as their Unbelief prevented them from entering into the promised Land, a Type of the heavenly Rest, so final Unbelief will as surely exclude all others from Heaven: God will not forsware himself to comply with Mens Fancies. Some have (I suppose for Want of better Arguments) affirmed, that the Way how God will save Infants is not yet revealed in Scripture.**

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Scripture; but I think it would be a less Reflection on God, to say he will save none of them; for if this is so, then the Scripture is not a perfect Rule of Faith: This opens a wide Door for all Manner of Enthusiasms: But I think this foolish Opinion not worthy of any further Confutation.

But the great Question is this, Whether Infants are under as great an Impossibility of having Faith, as of entering into Heaven without it? And to clear this I shall,

I. Prove that Infants are capable of having Faith wrought in them.

II. Prove that they are as capable of Faith as adult Persons are.

III. Prove that some Infants have had Faith. And if I do these, I set them on even Foot with adult Persons: And he that can tell how the latter may be saved, may also tell us how the former may.

I. Prove them Subjects capable of having Faith: I don't say all Infants have Faith, but that they are capable of it. If Faith was a Work wrought by the Power of Man, something might be said against this; but since it is the Work of God, and the Gift of God, that may answer all Objections; seeing God may give this Gift to, and work his Work in whom he will: If God will work, Who shall hinder him? Did God at first give us our Beings, and impress what Form he pleased on our Bodies, and by Breathing made us living Souls, without the least Help from Man in either? And is his Arm shortened, and his Power so abated, that he cannot rectifie the Disorders that Sin has made? Has Sin so fast closed our Eyes, that God cannot open them? Are we so far gone astray, and that from the Womb, that God cannot make us nigh? As the Apostle saith of the Resurrection of the Body, *Why should it be thought a Thing incredible that God should raise the Dead?* So why should it be thought incredible that God should work Faith in Infants? Says God, *Jer. xxxii. 27. Behold I am the Lord, the God of all Flesh, Is any Thing too hard for me?* Can't he that stretched out the Heavens, and laid

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the Foundation of the Earth, work Faith in Infants? 'Tis true there are some Things God cannot do, he cannot do any Thing inconsistent with the Purity of his Nature, he cannot lie, he cannot deny himself by going back from his Promises or Threatnings; but to work Faith is no Reflection on the Divine Perfections, but rather makes 'em to shine the brighter. What, Has Man done more for his Destruction, than God can do for his Salvation? Was the humane Nature capable of receiving an earthly Image, as united to *Adam*, as a publick Head, and is it not as capable of receiving a heavenly Image from Christ? Has Man so defaced the Image of God, that the Almighty can't repair it? I own that Faith is a Work of the exceeding Greatness of God's Power, but not above it. But I presume I may forbear enlarging on this Head, since some that deny Infants Faith are so far from questioning whether God can work it, that they think it may be done by a much feebler Power. I come therefore to that which some will more hardly grant, which is,

II. To prove that Infants are no less capable of Faith than adult Persons: He that works Faith in the latter, can as easily do it in the former. An adult Person is first passive in his Reception of that radical Grace or vital Principle from whence Faith proceeds, and so may an Infant. I cannot conceive what unsanctified Reason in the Adult can contribute to the working of Faith. We find but few of the wise and learned World do believe. Say they, *John vii. 48. Have any of the Rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?* and yet no Doubt, wise and learned Men. How little did *Nicodemus* know of a Work of Grace, tho' a Master in *Israel*. I am well assured that unsanctified Wisdom and Reason is so far from helping us to believe, that it is a very great Hindrance; and renders the Work so much the harder. Hence *Paul* dare not consult with Flesh and Blood: Long Custom in Sin makes it the harder to part with it. Continuance in Sin strengthens those vicious Habits that by Faith are much weaken'd. A carnal Man can conceive but little of the Work of the Spirit in the Soul, and contribute nothing

thing thereunto; 1 Cor. ii. 14. *For the Natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God: For they are Foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* This Text is as a Glass for every unrenewed Person to see his Natural Face in. By the Natural Man we are not to understand a mere unrenewed Man, but one that has attained to the most exquisite Accomplishments that one devoid of the Grace of God can attain to, as the Original signifies: *Ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος*: A Man all Soul. And of him it is not only said, that he receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, *i. e.* the inward Operations, as well as the outward Revelations of the Spirit, but that he cannot receive them: 'Tis not for Want of Diligence to study them, but they are above his Reach till the Spirit reveals them: And not only so, but they are Foolishness, in the Abstract, to him: To shew that such not only are ignorant of such Things, but have an Enmity against them. *Paul* in his carnal State was a Man of Reason, and much Learning; yet ignorant of Christ, and an Enemy to him. If Reason could help so much to the working of Faith as some suppose, How comes it to pass that we preach so often to numerous Assemblies of such as are indued with Reason, and yet so few believe? I am apt to think the Ground of this Mistake is not only Ignorance of the Greatness of this Work of Faith, and the Power of God in working it in them, but Ignorance of the very Nature of the Thing. The highest Notion some seem to have of Faith is, that it consents to all the Threats and Promises in Scripture as true; a poor Faith, without suitable Impressions on the Heart and Life thereby, and no better than what the very Devils may have, nor always so good; for they not only believe, but even tremble, *James ii. 19.*

III. I shall prove that some Infants have had Faith, and therefore others may; and if this can be done, the Difficulty of the Question is removed. Suppose I could prove only that some Infants have had the Habit of Faith, this will as truly denominate them Believers as the Act of Faith; for as a Believer is as truly a Believer when asleep, or delirious, as when in the Exercise of Reason,

he being denominated rather from the State he is in, than any particular Act: So where there is the Habit of Faith, they are as truly Believers as if they did put forth an Act of Faith; virtuous Habits are more noble, than any Acts that proceed from them; as the Cause, if good, is more noble than its Effects. Or suppose I could only prove the Point in Hand by fair and undeniable Consequences, and not from exprefs Words of Scripture, I hope it may pass for sound Doctrine, since our Lord himself hath done the same in other Causes; tho' I hope I shall not have Occasion to flee to either of these Sanctuaries, when I have produced all my Evidence. Now there are Three Scriptures that seem to confirm the Matter in Hand, and more Witnesses in any Case seem needless. The First is, *Luke i. 44. For lo, as soon as the Voice of thy Salutation sounded in mine Ears, the Babe leaped in my Womb for Joy.* Elizabeth hearing the good News of Christ coming into the World, the Babe leaped in her Womb for Joy; and no doubt but this was from some Discoveries the Spirit of God made to that Babe, of Christ; there must be more in it than a natural Motion: To rejoice in Christ, not only proves Faith true, but strong; there being many true Believers that can't do this. Thus *Abraham* discovered his Faith by rejoicing to see Christ's Day, *John viii. 56.* Another Text is *Matt. xvii. 14. But Jesus said, suffer little Children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.* I think I may take it for granted, that these little Children were not adult Persons. 'Tis said they were brought, as unable to come of themselves. *Mark* says Christ took them up in his Arms, *Mark x. 16.* And *Luke* expressly calls them Infants, *Luke xviii. 15.* And says our Lord, of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. And this being spoken by Christ that could not be mistaken, we ought to believe it to be true. But the great Thing is to know what we are to understand by the Kingdom of Heaven, and how to prove their Faith from thence. The Kingdom of Heaven is taken Three Ways, and if I mistake not, but Three Ways in Scripture; and take it in either of these, and it seems to confirm the Point in Hand: Sometime for the Kingdom of Glory in
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the World to come, *Matt. vii. 21. Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven;* to shew there is more required than a bare Profession, in order to our eternal Happiness: And if we take it so here, it proves their Faith; for if (as I have shewn) there is no getting to Heaven without Faith, then if they go to Heaven, such have Faith: And they that deny this, are to shew some other Way how they may get to Heaven, and ought to make good Proof of what they say. Sometime the Kingdom of Heaven signifies the Grace of God in us, *Matt. xiii. 31. The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a Grain of Mustard-Seed, &c.* to shew tho' Grace is often weak at first, yet it will increase: And if we understand it so here, it proves the Point; for if there is any Grace, there is Faith in them; he that hath one Grace, hath all Graces; and he that hath not all, hath none: For tho' as to the Strength of Grace it is often wrought gradually, yet we are not to suppose that God first works Love, then Faith; but all feminally and radically are wrought together. So that to deny that they have Faith, is to deny that they have any Grace, and so to shut them out from belonging to the Kingdom of Heaven, in the Sense under Consideration: And to deny them to belong to the Kingdom of Heaven in this Sense, is to exclude them from the Kingdom of Heaven in the first Sense, and then we know whither they must all go. Sometime by the Kingdom of Heaven we must understand the visible Church under the Gospel-State, as *Matthew xiii. 47. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a Net that was cast into the Sea, and gathered of every Kind, &c.* And if we take it in this Sense, it gives Ground to think those little Children had Faith; for tho' the mere belonging to the Church visible will not prove it, seeing there may be Tares as well as Wheat, yet Christ's blessing them in that Relation makes much to prove it: For tho' Hypocrites may be in the visible Church, as the Tares among the Wheat, yet they will be so far from getting the Blessing, that they will be like him that was Speechless for Want of the Wedding Garment, when it was said, *How camest thou in hither?* Now if it is granted that little Children may belong to the Kingdom of

of Heaven in either of these Senses, and I know no other, it will be hard to prove they have no Faith, but seems much to prove they have. But that Nothing may be wanting to confirm the Point in Hand, I shall produce a plain Scripture, *Matt. xviii. 6. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, ver. 2. Jesus called a little Child, and set him in the Midst of them;* and adds, *ver. 5. and whoso shall receive one such little Child in my Name, receiveth me:* And then brings in the Words I took Notice of. But some to evade the Force of this Text do tell us, He by those little ones means only his Disciples, and that he would have them imitate that little Child; but this is only to offer Violence to the Text. But suppose it was so, yet it proves the same Thing; for to exhort one to imitate another, supposes the Thing to be which we are to imitate: So for Christ to exhort his Disciples to imitate that Child in Humility, or in Faith, supposes the Being of those Graces, or else the Exhortation is vain.

Thus I hope I have set Infants upon an even Foot with the Adult; and to the Question, How are Elect Infants saved? I answer, so far as I can see, by Faith in Christ, even as the Adult are: And such as acknowledge a Necessity of Infants being Regenerated in Order to their Salvation, cannot with any Consistency with Truth or Reason deny the Necessity of their Faith. When our Lord says *Matt. xviii. 3. Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven;* what other Ideas can we form of these Words but that some little Children have that Grace wrought in them that is necessary in order to their Entering into Heaven? Whether that Grace was only in the Habit, or in the Act, it equally avails as to the present Purpose; if they have but that Grace which denominates them Believers, 'tis eno'. *Abraham* is said to offer up *Isaac*, though he did not actually do it, because of that Readiness of Mind to do it if not prevented by the Angel: So, suppose Infants not actually to believe, yet having a Propensity to do, arising from that Habit of Grace wrought in all such as are Regenerated, they may as well be said to believe on that Account, as *Abraham* could be said to offer

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ap *Isaac*; they wanting Nothing in Order thereunto but fit Organs to act by, and that not only by the Will of God permitting, but approving, and even appointing that it should be so. Infants are capable of Regeneration, or not: If they are, then it proves them capable of Faith, at least in the Habit of it; Regeneration being an Infusing the Habits of all Grace at once: If not capable, this is to deny their natural Depravity, contrary to many Scriptures, or to affirm they may get to Heaven without Regeneration, contrary to *John* iii. 3. *Except a Man be born, &c.* Nor is the Word *Man* there to be limited to Age or Sex: *Tis*, is often render'd *Aliquis*, and is equally applicable to either Young or Old. But if any will own the Depravity of Infants, and the Necessity of Regeneration in Order to Salvation, and yet deny them to be capable of Regeneration, 'tis easie to see what Thoughts such must have of the Eternal State of all such as die in Infancy. Now tho' I don't say that all Infants have Faith, nor can I say of any particular Infants by Name that this or that Child hath Faith, no, not in the Habit; yet I shall firmly continue of this Mind, that all that get to Heaven have Faith, till some other Way is found out to Heaven than what is yet Revealed: And it highly concerns such as deny this, to say, and prove from Scripture some other Way for them to Heaven.

But some may say, After all you have said, I *Can Not* believe that Infants have Faith. To such I would say as *Paul* to *Agrippa*, *Acts* xxvi. 7. *Believest thou the Prophets?* So, *Believest thou the Apostles; yea, or Christ himself?* If thou believest and understandest either of these, I think thou canst not but believe that Infants are capable of Receiving Grace: But if such will believe neither, I am as hard to believe them to be Christians. If Nothing must be believ'd but what we can comprehend, we must reject many more Scriptures than those that prove a Necessity of Infants Grace in Order to their Salvation. But some may say, This is a New Doctrine: To this I answer, He that is acquainted with Scripture, yea or with the Writings of Protestants or Papists, will not call this New: But suppose it so, yet if a Truth, the more Need to hear of it now: Why should the New-

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ness of any Thing render it contemptible, when the World are wholly Running into new Things. A new Way of Preaching is very taking to some, and some New Light into Old Truths one would think should do no Harm.

Nor doth *Calvin* himself differ from me herein, tho' I suppose many professed *Calvinists* will: He puts this Question, "Say some, How are Infants regenerated? We answer, Tho' the Work of God is above our Capacity, we must not therefore deny it; for if they bring with them from their Mothers Womb inbred or natural Corruption, it behoves them to be cleansed from it before they are admitted into the Kingdom of God, into which Nothing polluted or defiled shall enter." *Hec ille. Inst. Lib. 4. Cap. 16. Sect. 17.* 'Tis as easie for God to enable an Infant actually to believe, as to work in it the Habit of Faith; and as easie to us to conceive how he may do it.

Proposition V. [None but such as God hath thus Elected, can be Saved:] As All these shall, so None but these will, or can. God must first alter his Decrees, before any other can be saved. Hence *Rev. xxi. 27.* *And there shall in no wise enter any Thing into it that defileth,--but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.* And indeed if God will not save, How can they be saved? Can they break open the Gate that leads to Life, or climb up some other Way? If God shuts, can any open? Is not Heaven his own, to bestow it on whom He will? Tho' I do not expect that all will receive this Truth. *Object.* This is a hard Saying, Who can hear it? This is very discouraging; Who would strive to please God, seeing if not Elected all his Labour is in vain, and he lost. Thus argue the World, and that without the least Cause; but to such I answer, if the Thing is true, it must be defended, tho' ever so discouraging: But to whom is it so, to any that sincerely fear God, and keep his Commandments? To any that repent of, and turn from Sin? To such as are willing to embrace Christ as held forth in the Gospel? No verily, to none of these. Nay, it is so far from discouraging any from believing, or repenting, or obeying, that it affords the sweetest Encouragements

couragements so to do, whilst it proves such are elected, and consequently that they shall be saved; and much greater Encouragements than the contrary Doctrine can do, which at best renders their Salvation uncertain. So that the only Persons it discourages, are either the profane Sinners, or hypocritical *Pharisees*, that either resolve to go on in their Wickedness, or hope to be saved for what they have done; and to this I say *Amen*, so let it. I know no Doctrine of the Gospel that encourages such to go on in their Ways; and if this did, I should question the Truth of it, and have as little Love to it as any of them now can: It is the Excellency of this Truth to discourage such, and to beat down their presumptuous Confidence; and yet these are the only Persons it discourages: And let that Doctrine be for ever anathematiz'd as false, and a Doctrine of Devils, that encourages such to hope for Salvation, as either live and die in their Sins without Repentance; or that by a mere Shew in the Flesh seek for Justification, or Salvation, in Opposition to the Righteousness of Christ.

Some will own that all the Elect shall be saved, but think others may if they will, and that particular Election and general Redemption are no ways inconsistent. But what will such say to *Rom. xi. 7, 5*? *What then, Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh after; but the Election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.* If all that are willing to be saved may be so, I question whether any will perish; since it is natural to Man to desire to be happy, tho' not to take the Way so to be; and the Vilest of Men will say, *as they hope to be saved*; which contains not only a Will to be so, but Hope that they shall be so: But how such came by that Hope, is easie to determine.

But because this Scheme is by many thought such profound Divinity, I shall duly weigh it in the Ballance of the Sanctuary, and can't but think it will be found wanting. But by the Way, if one single Instance could have been given of one not elected that ever was saved, it would have done more Service to their Cause than a thousand Affirmations. But I suppose when such say others may be saved if they will, they do not mean a mere

Will to be saved, but to be diligent in the Use of the Means of Salvation, especially if they will but put forth all their Strength therein, then they not only may be saved, but can't well miss of it. I remember when Christ put this Question to his Followers, *The Baptism of John whence was it?* They seeing how they should be snared, said they could not tell: In no less Dilemma will the Patrons of this Opinion be if I ask them this harmless Question, Whether this Power to repent, &c. is of God, or from themselves? If they say (as I suppose most of that Opinion will) that it is from themselves, let them answer such Scriptures as follow, *John vi. 44. John xv. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 5. John x. 26. Phil. i. 13.* But if they say this is of God, then it amounts to this, That the Non-Elect may be saved if God will; and the Matter is brought where it was, and turns wholly on the Will of God: So that where God refuses to work this Will, he never willed to bring such to Heaven. Perhaps it will be said, if Men would do all they can, then God would give 'em Grace. But I further ask, Who must make 'em willing to take this great Pains? If God saves none but such as do all they can, I am verily persuaded he will save none; for then the Sinners All is next to Nothing at all in God's Sight yet the Best of them may do more than they do: I cannot but fear this Doing will be the Undoing of many. Oh! how hardly is Man brought off from Self, and made to depend on Free Grace, by which alone he can be saved. Instead of coming in by Christ as the Door, how desperately will they venture to climb up some other Way. They are loath to be shut for ever out of Heaven, and as loth to enter in to Heaven that Way God hath appointed; and will rather never come there, then be beholden to Free and Sovereign Grace to bring them thither. If Man cannot attain to that which the *Papists* call *Merit of Condignity* to merit Glory; he will struggle hard but he will attain to their *Merit of Congruity*, to merit Grace. The Scripture gives us no Ground to think that the utmost Diligence will ever bring a Non-Elect Soul to Heaven. Let us consider a few Texts, *Rom. xi. 7.* that which before took Notice of to another End: Here was *Israel* seeking to get to Heaven by Works, in Opposition to the Grace

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of God, mention'd *ver. 5.* and they were such as had the Word of God to guide them, and yet could not obtain it. But some may say, it was because they were not diligent eno' in seeking. No, that's not the Cause; for the Word *Ἐπιζητεῖν* signifies to seek with the most earnest Desire, and utmost Endeavour to obtain what is sought for: But the true Cause was, because they belonged not to the Election. While *Israel* missed what they thus sought for, the *Gentiles* that belonged to the Number of the Elect found it without seeking, as is clear *Chap. ix. 27. 30.* compared. Thus we read of *Esau*, an Example of the Non-Elect, after his Folly in selling the Blessing of the Birth-Right, he saw his Folly, and came to his Father to beg the Blessing; and 'tis said he sought it carefully with Tears: Yea, see how earnest he was, *Genesis xxvii. 34, 38.* *He cries with a great and exceeding bitter Cry, and said unto his Father, bless me, even me also, O my Father; ver. 6. and Esau said unto his Father, hast thou but one Blessing, O my Father? And Esau lift up his Voice, and wept:* And yet 'tis said, *Hebrews xii. 17. he found no Place of Repentance, &c. i. e.* in his Father; he would not change his Mind, but answers, *Gen. xxvii. 33. I have blessed him, yea and he shall be blessed:* Yea, tho' he did not desire to get the Blessing from his Brother, but to be blessed with him, and yet could not prevail. It can scarce enter into our Hearts to conceive how so good a Man as *Isaac* could be so inexorable to the loud and bitter Cries of his own Child, backt by that moving Epithet *O my Father*, and that when his Son, in Love to his Father, had prepared such savoury Meat, had he not herein typically represented the unchangeable Counsel and Purpose of God.

Nor is there any just Cause of Discouragement in what hath been said in the diligent Use of such Means as God hath appointed, since no Sinner can tell what the Counsel of God is as to him in particular. An *it may be*, and a *who can tell*, which always attend this Doctrine, are sufficient Motives to seek the Lord, and turn from the Evil of our Ways; *Zeph. ii. 3. Jonah iii. 9.* He that will not seek for Heaven till he is sure he shall get to it, declares himself unworthy, and unlikely ever to come there: And

whether his continuing in such a Resolution, or Non-Election, is the surest Character of one in a lost and perishing State, seems hard to be determin'd.

As God has appointed Means, so all ought to be diligent in the Use of those Means; nor doth the Doctrine of Election, when rightly understood, lay any Stumbling-Block in the Way of such as do, but rather encourages thereunto: Hence 2 *Pet.* i. 10. *Wherefore the rather, Brethren, give Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure; for if you do these Things, ye shall never fall.* If any stumble at this Doctrine, and forsake the Means, must we deny such a Truth to bring them back, or can we ever expect that God will bless the Means that such are brought unto hereby? Those cannot be call'd Means of God's appointing. Says God, *Jer.* xv. 19. *Let them return unto thee, but return not Thou unto them:* We must not forsake the Truth to encourage Sinners, tho' they should perish. But to speak the Truth, this Doctrine is a far greater Encouragement to Sinners to wait on God in his Appointments, than the contrary Doctrine can be. To clear this, I shall shew what may be objected against both, and what each hath to say for his Doctrine, to answer such Objections, and remove such Discouragements. Let us suppose a Sinner saying thus, I am willing to wait on God in his Appointments, but if I am not Elected, All will avail Nothing, my utmost Diligence can make no Change in the Mind of God. To this we may answer, That tho' God designs to save none but his Elect, yet that Number absolutely consider'd is very great; *Rev.* vii. 9. *After this I beheld, and lo a great Multitude, which no Man could number, of all Nations, and Kindreds, and People, and Tongues, stood before the Throne, &c.* And further we may say, as this Number is so very great, so thou dost not know but thou art one of that Number: Yea, forasmuch as God has appointed Means to bring about his Purposes, so thy Diligence in the Use of those Means gives thee good Ground to hope thou art one of them: And therefore Soul go on in this Work. But suppose he replies, Was I sure I was one of that Number, then I should go on; but till then my Hands are weaken'd. To such we may fur-

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ther answer, That this looks like a mere Excuse to justify himself in the Neglect of those Means he has no Mind to use, and in committing such Sins as his wicked Heart was set upon; for if he thought there was any real Excellency in the Ways of God, more than in Sin, he would be found in the former, tho' he perished there. And to prove that this is no unjust Charge brought in against him, we argue from his diligent Use of Means in other Cases, that are attended with as great Uncertainties as these are, and much greater. We prove that if he plows his Land, tho' 'tis hard Work, he is not sure of a Crop; if he sails by Sea, he is not sure of gaining by such a Voyage; nor indeed, that he shall escape with his Life; and yet Hopes it may be so, excite hereunto: And if he was as willing to venture for God and the Soul as for the World, the Difficulty is removed; but if not, they are Hypocrites who would be thought to have a Love for what is good, when really there is no such Thing.

On the other Hand, here comes a Sinner to one that believes the Doctrine of Election, (that All that are Elected shall be Saved, but that all others may, if they will be diligent in the Use of the Means) and tells him he designs to be diligent in God's Ways, but is discouraged for fear all should not end well. Says the Patron of that Opinion, fear not, for if thou art diligent in the Use of the Means, thou canst not miscarry; Elected, or not Elected. But says the Sinner, I love to go on Certainties in such great Concerns; I want to be well inform'd in one Thing, and then I'll go to work and try to take Heaven by Storm; and that is, to know if any Instance is found recorded in Scripture, (for by that Rule we are to walk, and by that I must be judged) of one Soul not Elected that ever was Saved: If not, What doth your arguing prove? To this grand Question he answers, 'Tis true there have been Millions of Millions of Souls since the World was created, and tho' we don't read of one among all those that were not Elected that ever was Saved, 'tis possible thou mayst be the First: Cold Comfort surely! But suppose the Sinner further to ask this harmless Question, Is it your Judgment that such as are not Elected may possibly be Saved? And here he stands Speechless;

Speechless; but having consider'd of the Matter, he tells him the Fault is their own: And who denies this? He tells him, tho' he can't give one single Instance of a Non-Elect Soul saved, and it is his very Judgment that tho' not one of them ever was, yet they may be if they will be diligent in the Use of the Means. Well, says the Sinner, here is but poor Encouragement; but since 'tis all I can get from your Scheme, I'll make the best I can of it: But before I engage herein, How far must I go, and how much Work must I do, before I obtain that which no Man ever yet obtain'd? Will a slight Endeavour do? Suppose I hear the Word preach'd once or twice a Week, may I depend on that so as that the Spirit of God will certainly come in with such Endeavours, and work effectually in me? He must answer, No, this is not enough; for Thousands have gon thus far, and yet lived and died in Sin. But suppose says the Sinner I go further, and pray as well as hear, yea, make long Prayers; and to this add, that I abstain from outward gross Sins, and am no Extortioner, nor Unjust, nor Adulterer, yea, and fast twice a Week, and give Tithes of all that I possess, Will all these do? He must answer, No, such as never were justified have done all these. Says he, There is but one Way, to deal plainly, that will infallibly do; and that is to do the utmost thou possibly canst, and then thou art safe: But to speak the Truth, never any Man before the Fall, or since the Fall did this. *Adam* did not all that he could, for if he had he had never sinned; nor have any of his fallen Race done more than he. We read of some that fasted twice a Week, but they might have fasted oftner: Some that made long Prayers, but might have made longer: &c. So that unless thou canst attain to such a Measure of Diligence as never any mere Man did, I must confess I have no more to say: Nothing short of this can secure thee, if not Electd. To this the Sinner may answer, Miserable Comforters are ye all, I am as one mocked by his Friend, I'll no more give Heed to such seducing Spirits, I can't get to Heaven this Way unless I actually give away all that I have, for that I am able to do. You tell me doing a small Matter will not secure me, nor doing much more, nor any Thing

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what Man never attained to, or that God required of him. May the Sinner say, I'll now betake myself to that comfortable Doctrine of Election, which teaches that all such as God hath from Eternity chosen to Salvation he will work Faith in, and by the Use of Means help to increase in Grace and Holiness; and having justified them by his Grace, for the Sake only of the Righteousness of Christ, will accept of those Endeavours, tho' attended with many Imperfections, without putting such a Yoke upon them as neither they nor their Fathers were able to bear. By this Doctrine of Election I am made to see that tho' Means are to be used, yet God is not so tied to Means, but that he has given his Spirit to such as not only come short in doing all they could, but even sometime to such as had done little therein: And that such as did not so much as follow after the Righteousness of Faith did attain to it, and such as did follow after Righteousness did not attain to it, *Rom. ix. 30, 31.* and both as the Consequences of Election there treated on: Yea, we read of one who being a chosen Vessel, was converted when he was going to oppose and persecute such as called on the Name of the Lord; and must we for fear of offending poor deluded Souls deny, or but conceal these Truths wherein the Grace of God so much appears? Before I can fall in with such as lay the Stresses of their Salvation, and even Conversion, on the Endeavours of carnal Men, I must see some Texts clear'd that look another Way; as *John xv. 5. Isa. i. 13, 14, 15.* If it is objected God speaks so contemptuously of the Performances of this People, *Isaiah i.* because 'tis said *ver. 15. Your Hands are full of Blood.* I answer, So may it be said of all carnal and unsanctified Souls; and not only their Hands, but their Hearts too, which is worse. We all come into the World polluted and defiled by Sin, which is call'd a being in our Blood. Our Condition as we came into the World is clearly set forth, *Ezek. xvi. 4, 5, 6.* and so we remain in God's Sight till renewed; and under the most specious Shews of Sanctity, are but as painted Sepulchres. By Blood we are not always to understand it of Murder, no, nor of the highest Immoralities; but by Blood we are sometimes to understand

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our Natural State. Thus when Christ said to *Peter*, *Matt. xvi. 17. Flesh and Blood hath not revealed it unto thee, &c.* 'tis to shew it did not proceed from Nature, but Divine Revelation: So when the Apostle says, *Ephe- sians vi. 12. For we wrestle not with Flesh and Blood, &c.* 'tis to shew what Discouragements they would meet with, not only from the World and from *Satan*, but also from the unsanctified Part within. I have the more insisted on this Head, well knowing how hard a Thing it is to take Souls off from depending on what they do, and the great Danger of resting on what they have done. 'Tis hard to bring Souls to perform Duties, but much harder to take them off from laying too much Strefs on Duties when perform'd: But 'tis impossible to be saved by making Flesh our Arm, *Jer. xvii. 5, Thus saith the Lord, &c.* as Christ will not bear with any to come in as Partners or Coworkers with him in the Work of Redemption, so no more will the Spirit bear for any to be Coworkers with him in implanting the first Principle of Sanctification; all is of free Grace, Nothing owing to the Creature in the one or in the other. As Christ is all in the former, so the Spirit of Christ is all in the latter: This Wind bloweth where it listeth, and the Spirit works as a Sovereign Agent. As it would be thought a foolish Attempt in any to pretend to cause the Wind to blow, so it seems to favour but little of the Wisdom that cometh from Above to cause the Wind of the Spirit to blow with his quickening Influence on the Soul, or but to prophesie when it will. The Spirit often refuses to work Grace in such as have seem'd zealous concerning the Law, as in the *Pharisees*, and perhaps as often works Grace in such as have liv'd in Neglect and Contempt of the Law; yet this is not to discourage the former in his observing the Law, nor to encourage the latter in his Neglect of Duty; but to shew, that as the former can't engage him to work, so the latter can't prevent him. Many that have come to hear the Word, to mock at it, have been converted by it. In a Word, as the Father chose us to Sanctification without any Thing done, or foreseen to be done, by the Creature moving of him thereunto; and as the Son of God died to purchase the same, and purchas'd it for

no more than for whom the Father decreed it; so the Spirit works it agreeable to Both, these Three exactly agree as One. And as the Father did not decree it because they would be holy, much less because they were so, but that they should be so; and as the Son died to procure it for all that the Father had given him, be they moral or profane; so the Spirit works it in the same Persons, whether moral or profane: He will not add one to the Number because of his seeming Goodness, nor leave one out of that Number because of his real Wickedness; but acts in all according to the Decree of the Father, and Purchase of the Son. Many robb God of the Glory due for our Salvation, as formerly hinted; they robb the Father of his Glory in chusing, while they deny that he chuses any till some good Works are done, or at least foreseen, as moving him thereunto; and so obscure the Glory of his Grace, since without those good-for-nothing Works he had never chose them: They have the Honour (if any due) of performing those Works that thus moved God to chuse, and God has the Glory of being moved thereunto; so the Honour seems equally parted between them. Nor will they give Christ the Honour due to him as our Redeemer, while they assert he has only procured a Relaxation of the Severity of the Law, and obtained of Justice an honourable Composition, and instead of 100 to take 99. They give him the Honour of procuring the Composition, but assume the Honour of paying it to themselves, and by no Means will they be beholden to him to undertake to pay the whole Debt with his own Hand. Nor will they give the Glory due to the Spirit of God as the Sanctifier, while they make his Work to depend on ours; he hath the Honour to finish, Man has the Honour to begin, and by no Means will they own that he works Grace in an invincible Manner; contrary to *Acts* vi. 10. Thus the Glory is divided between them and the Spirit, one Part to them for improving common Grace, the other to him for working special Grace. One Part to them for trimming their Lamps, another to him for putting Oil thereinto, or perhaps for causing that to burn which they had bought. One Part to them for doing what they could, another Part

due to him for doing what they could not. One Part to them for laying the Foundation, another Part to him for raising the Superstructure. When that proud *Herod* assum'd that Honour to himself that was not due, the Angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the Glory, and declar'd his Abhorrence of his Pride and Arrogance, while he stank above Ground; for while others die first, and then are eaten of the Worms; he was first eaten of the Worms, and then gave up the Ghost: *Acts* xii. 21, 22, 23. No less jealous is God now of his Glory, nor will he in any wise give it to another. *Judas's* fair Words, *Hail Master*, nor his flattering hypocritical Kifs, would not excuse or conceal his Treason; no more will the fair Pretences of some attone for the Dishonour done by them to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And when Things are come to this, 'tis no Wonder if God's Presence is withdrawn, and the converting Influences of the Spirit of God withheld, as a Testimony of their Abhorrence of this Contempt cast upon them. Nor do I expect that these Things ever will be better, till those great Gospel Truths are more clearly preached, and more steadfastly believed, and heartily embraced.

But some, to prove that God is not wanting on his Part in order to the Salvation of such as are not saved, do strenuously urge, *Isa.* v. 3, 4. *And now O Inhabitants of Jerusalem, and Men of Judah, judge I pray you betwixt me and my Vinyard: What could have been done more to my Vinyard, that I have not done in it?* Now to do Justice to the Text, he must inquire into Two Things: 1. What is meant by this Vinyard? Now as Vinyards are not planted on Commons, but are inclosed and fenced, as *ver.* 2. so this notes some peculiar People that God had bestow'd great Favours upon, and not the whole World: For what can that be fenced from, or taken out of? And so makes Nothing to the Point in Hand, in which we are inquiring, what will be the End of Non-Elect Souls. 2. 'Tis no less necessary to inquire who these Inhabitants of *Jerusalem* and Men of *Judah* were, that were the Plants in this Vinyard? Whether they were converted Persons, or not? If they were, and that God here shews his Displeasure because they brought forth no more

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Fruit, then this is foreign to the Point in Hand; since we are not inquiring into the State of Believers, but of Non-Elect Unbelievers. But if you say those were Unbelievers, and unconverted Persons, then you make it to be out of God's Power to convert them; which is a much darker Reflection cast on his Power, than Election is on any other Attribute. It seems little less to me than Blasphemy, to say that God has done so much towards the Conversion of any, that he can do no more, and yet such are not converted. This is in Effect to deny him to be God, since whatsoever is Supreme in Power, &c. is God. They represent the Case thus; Here is the Omnipotent God striving with Man to convert him, till he owns he can do no more; and so his Almightyness is at once overthrown. On the other hand, here is a vile weak Man that will not be overcome by him, and so God is forced to let him perish, yea, with his own Hand to destroy him; and to say thus, O Sinner, I have destroy'd thee, but in thee was thy Help found. What unworthy Thoughts of God are these! It seems evident to me there is Nothing of Salvation or Damnation design'd in that Chapter; the Design of which is to shew, that as God had bestow'd many Blessings on a certain peculiar People, so if they did not make a right Use of them, he would take them away from them. Or suppose those Blessings to consist in the Means of Grace, then for their Ingratitude he would take them away from them; as ver. 5. *And now go to, I will tell you what I will do to my Vinyard: I will take away the Hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the Wall thereof, and it shall be troden down; and I will lay it waste, and it shall not be pruned nor digged, &c.* You see here is Nothing but Temporal Judgments named. And whereas he says, what could have been done more, &c. he alludes to the Custom of Men, who when they have done all they can to make Ground fruitful, and find it don't answer their End, they are wont to give it up. But to suppose from hence that God had done all he could to convert that People, and yet could not, is a gross Abuse of that Text. 'Tis easie to tell what God could have done more, to such as were not converted; he that gave them the Means, could have

blest those Means, and made them effectual to their Conversion, as he had to others. Says God, *Jer.* xxxii. 27. *Is there any Thing too hard for me? &c. Isa.* lxiii. 13. *I will work, and who shall let it? Isa.* xiv. 27. *For the Lord of Hosts hath purposed it, and who shall disannul it? And his Hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?* Thus you see what poor Shelter some are forced to fly to, to keep off the Force of Divine Truths. God speaks very contemptuously of the best Works of wicked Men, *Prov.* xxi. 27. and so *Isa.* lxvi. 3. *John* ix. 31. Though hearing, praying, and offering Sacrifices to God were of Divine Appointment; yet those being wicked Men, they never obtained saving Grace. If any say, it was because they did not improve what they had; I answer, If such Duties thus perform'd are not an improving what Power they had, I know not what is. If it is said that tho' the Duties were good, yet they did not go far eno' to gain the Reward; I think it is reasonable to put such upon telling, and proving what is that Degree of Obedience exactly on the Performance of which such cannot fail of gaining saving Grace. But since such Strefs is laid on the Degree of Obedience, I shall name one that went so far, that it is not easie to conceive how he could by any Power but saving Grace go further, and yet came short of saving Grace; *Luke* xviii. 11, 12, 13, 14. Observe, he was not as other Men, &c. i. e. not so wicked, he had escaped the gross Impieties others allow'd themselves in; and he gives the Glory to God, which is more than some will do. Nor was he only clear from such Sins, (which is more I am sure than some of those great Doers are) but he tells us he fasted twice in the Week; had he fasted every Day in the Week, he would soon have done all that he could. Yea, he gave Tithes of all that he had; but he miss'd the Mark, because he might have given the Whole. But since the Tenth Part was all that God requir'd, and fasting twice a Week something more, and much more than they do that put others on doing, How could he possibly come short of saving Grace? The only Answer that can be given is, That those Duties were not done with Sincerity; if they had, they could not have fail'd of saving Grace. And indeed

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this we own to be a Truth, tho' it doth no Service to the Cause for which it is brought, but wholly overthrows it. If Men did sincerely believe, sincerely repent, sincerely pray, &c. these infallibly prove the Person to have saving Grace: For what can any sanctified believing Soul do more? Yet this proves Nothing to the Point in Hand, because this proves only that they have special Grace, not that they shall have it: These act from special Grace, not for it. So that if all Performances that are not done in Sincerity are ineffectual, and God takes no Pleasure in 'em, yea is greatly offended with them; and he that hath Sincerity is in a saving State, you may easily see that all the Noise some make of Sinners great doing is come to Nothing. There is a better Way, and more agreeable to Scripture, to encourage Sinners to Duty; namely, that doing Duties well is God's Appointment, and the Way in which he is often found; and that there is more than a Possibility that such may find Mercy, tho' there is not a Certainty thereof; or tho' God is not made a Debtor hereby. A Probability sets all Hands at work: The Husbandman is not sure of a Crop; yet, in Hopes that he may, takes great Pains, and commits the Success to Divine Providence. The Mariner is not sure of a good Market, no, nor that he shall escape with his Life; but, in Hopes of both, he commits himself to the gracious Protection of God. And shall we not venture as far for the Glory of God, and Good of our own precious Souls, as we do for the Body? Such as will not work till they are sure of the Reward, evidently prove that they have no Love to the Work, but only to the Reward; and prove themselves Hypocrites thereby, and the most unlikely Persons in the World to obtain that Reward. But some may say, there is a Natural Sincerity that stands in Opposition to known Hypocrisie; and is distinct from Evangelical Sincerity, or true and saving Grace; and this is all we mean. Answer, I allow the Distinction, but deny the Consequence. Paul tells us, *Acts xxvi. 9, 10. I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many Things contrary to the Name of Jesus, which Things I also did.* Now tho' he acted with this Natural Sincerity herein, yet his so doing did not render those Actions sinless,

less, or acceptable to God. So though Man may with the same kind of Sincerity perform real Duties, that he did what he thought to be such, yet the former can no more render such Actions acceptable to God, than the latter could *Paul's* persecuting of Christ. If without Faith 'tis impossible to please God, then we can't depend on any Thing without it, that it shall be follow'd with saving Grace. 'Tis Christ, and not our Sincerity either Natural or Evangelical, that renders our Service acceptable to God: Hence we are said, *2 Pet. ii. 5. to offer up spiritual Sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*: How unlikely then, and impossible is it, that the lifeless Performances of Sinners should be acceptable to God, when such as are spiritual are render'd so only by Christ? Our Lord tells us, *John xv. 5. For without me ye can do Nothing*. Why, cannot such read, hear, give Alms, tho' not in Christ? Yes, but all these are nothing to God, so long as Carnal and Christless; the Manner of doing these more displeases God, than the meer Acts please him. *Obj.* Then 'tis best never to endeavour to perform Duties till renew'd. *Ans.* Not so, for tho' we ought not to do Evil, that Good may come on't; yet we may and ought to do what is materially Good, tho' Evil come on't: In doing what is commanded there is something Good, but in omitting it there is nothing but Evil. A more Evangelical Conclusion would be to say, since all I can do is so sinful, I'll do such Duties, because the Matter of them is good; and disown all Confidence in them, because the Manner of my doing them is so evil. I'll be found in the Way of my Duty; and if I perish, I'll perish there. I'll hope in the Mercy of God, that he will come in and bless my poor Endeavours; tho' I have no Assurance that he will, nor can see any Cause to move him thereby that he should. I'll cry to the Spirit of God for Assistance, trust to the Son of God for Acceptance of me and my Duty; depending on his Righteousness, and his only, for Grace here, and Glory hereafter.

There is one Text that effectually throws down that Idol of Natural Sincerity that many are setting up in the Province of *Babylon*, *Prov. xxi. 27. The Sacrifice of the Wicked is an Abomination to the Lord: How much more*

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when he bringeth it with a wicked Mind? Observe, The Reason why this was an Abomination to the Lord, was not because he did not command it, but because he was wicked that offer'd it. And this wicked Person is set forth two Ways, one is exprest, the other imply'd. That which is exprest is, That he did it with a wicked Mind, *i. e.* a Mind wholly devoid of all manner of Sincerity: Had he had Evangelical Sincerity, he could not be a wicked Man; if he had Natural Sincerity, he had not done it with such a wicked Mind: He was one that like *Saul* forc'd himself to offer Sacrifice, without any Love to it, or Delight in it; his Ends were hypocritical. That which is imply'd is, That a Person may be wicked, and his Performances abominable to God, tho' he doth not do them with such a wicked Mind; for if his Mind was as wicked as the other's, there would be no Room for a *How much more*, &c. If then that wicked Mind consisted in the Want of Sincerity, which we call Natural, then he that had not such a wicked Mind could not fall under the same Charge, but must be supposed to have what the other wanted: And yet we see that he that had that wicked Mind, and he that had not, both did that which was an Abomination to the Lord; tho' the former did more provoke God than the latter. From whence it seems plain, that tho' Duties done with a natural Sincerity, are not so abominable as those attended with known Hypocrisie; yet the former are so far from being acceptable to God, that he is greatly provoked thereby, as being destitute of the Grace of God: Yet not with the Actions themselves, but with the Manner or Ends that do always accompany such Actions.

'Tis the Property of a sincere Soul to delight in doing Duty: He forsakes Sin not only as it is damning, but as it is vile and hateful in his Sight. He performs Duty not as one dragg'd to it, but as one that loves it; he chuses it as that which is beautiful, and most agreeable to his Nature: And if there was no Hell to punish, he would not delight in Sin; or that he had no Assurance of getting to Heaven, yet he would be found in God's Ways; and says as *Job xiii. 15.* *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: But I will maintain my own Ways before him:*

him: As if he had said, If he sends me to Hell, I'll hold on in the Way I am in. Nor is *Job* the only Person that was sincere, and yet under some Uncertainties what the Event would be. For tho' the Happiness of every True Saint is secured in the Unchangeable Purpose of God, and clearly reveal'd in the Word of God, as *Psal. lviii. 11. Verily there is a Reward for the Righteous*. But tho' the Thing itself is thus sure, yet every Saint hath not this Assurance in him; he knows there is a Reward for the Righteous, but is not perhaps sure that he is one of that Number. And tho' many a sincere Saint is at some Uncertainties as to this, yet he holds on his Way; he doubts, yet prays, hears, &c. yea, such a Soul would chuse to die rather than cast off Duty, and return to his former sinful Ways. What must we think then of those Merit-Mongers, that will do nothing for God till they are assured of no less Blessing than saving Grace from him? What a mercenary and base Spirit are such acted by, and possessed with! To illustrate this, A King declares his Resolution to bestow great Favours on many of his poor Subjects, tho' not on all; such a Declaration is eno' to put all, especially such as are poor and must perish without it, to use all Means for a Share in it, tho' they are not sure to speed: Thus God declares his Resolution to give his special Grace to some, reserving their Names to himself, and has appointed Means to be used in order thereunto: This is sufficient to put all upon the Use of those Means, because tho' they are not sure they shall be effectual to them all, yet no particular Person is sure but they may be so to him; And what has he to do with others? We are commanded to work out our own Salvation, and not the Salvation of others; to make our own Calling and Election sure, and not the Calling or Election of other Men: And what we ought to think of such as spend all their Time in censuring others, and take no Care of themselves, you may easily judge. When one came to Christ, saying, as *Luke xiii. 23. Are there few that go saved?* Christ answers *ver. 24. Strive to enter in at the strait Gate, for many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able*: As if he had said, trouble not thyself about the Number that God will save, that doth not belong

belong to thee, be they many, or be they few; take thou Care of thyself. And tho' many that seek to enter into Heaven by the Use of Means, shall not be able; yet let not this cause thee to neglect those Means, but rather put thee upon the more diligent Use of them, to obtain what they could not: While they seek, do thou strive, *Luke xiii. 24.* *Αγωνίζεσθε*; strive as in an Agony, as the Word signifies. Tho' we are not sure we are elected, yet Hopes that we are should put us on the most diligent Use of all Means by which God doth bring about his gracious Ends. Yea, let me say, as to such as do sincerely give this Diligence in the Performance of such Duties as God requires, they have undoubted Reason to conclude they are in the Number of the Elect, however few they are: For as such sincere Diligence proves that Soul (as I have shewn) to have received saving Grace; so this saving Grace proves such to be elected, since God gives it to none but such as are. So that I cannot conceive what further Encouragement such would have to the Performance of Duty than the Doctrine of Election holds forth, unless to encourage them in a supine and ositant Manner to take Sin in their Right-Hand and Duty in their Left; or rather perform some Duties as a Cloak for those Sins: As that Whore, *Prov. vii. 14, 18.* *I have Peace Offerings with me, this Day have I paid my Vows*; ver. 18. *come let us take our Fill of Love*: As if she had said, If we do offend God hereby, yet I know how to make Peace with God. O egregious Wickedness!

Whereas 'tis said that the Non-Elect may be saved if they will but improve that common Grace that God has given to all Men, let us see how this will hold true as to the Heathen Part of the World; for they must certainly come in among [all Men]: For tho' it may be question'd whether God has any of his Elect there, yet no doubt but some Non-Elect are among them. Now if those are capable of being saved if they will, it must be as coming up to the Terms of the first or second Covenant; the Covenant of Works, or the Covenant of Grace. To say they may be saved by the Covenant of Works, is to give the Apostle the Lie; who tells us, *Rom. iii. 20.* *By the Deeds of the Law shall no Flesh be justified in his Sight*:

Which Words extend to Heathens. These, as they descend from *Adam* as well as we, are equally involv'd with us in his Guilt: And this first Covenant being once broken, can never be repair'd, but exposes the Transgressor to the Curse denounced; *Gal. iii. 10. For as many as are of the Works of the Law, are under the Curse: For it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.* Nor (2) can they be saved by the second Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, in the State and Condition they are in, by their greatest Diligence to improve their Abilities. I grant they are capable of being converted, and to have the Gospel revealed to them; but this depends purely on the Sovereign Will of God, and not on any Improvement of theirs. But we are not to consider what God can do in bringing them out of Darknes, but to consider the present State they are in. Now 'tis evident all their Endeavours cannot further, much less secure their Salvation on Gospel-Terms; for they know not what they are: *How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?* To say such perish because they have no Will to believe in Christ, is not only egregious Trifling, but intirely false: For how can such be charged as unwilling to comply with the Terms of the Gospel, who never knew what those Terms are to try 'em whether willing or not willing? 'Tis evident the Point doth not turn upon their Unwillingness to comply with the Terms of the Gospel; but on the Sovereign Will of God in not revealing to them those Gospel-Terms, and enabling them by special Grace to embrace them. Nor dare I after all, absolutely condemn all the Heathens, not knowing but God may in some secret and extraordinary Manner reveal Christ to some of them by his Spirit, which Wind blows where it lists; and may by the same Spirit work those Graces in them which he requires of them as necessary to Salvation: I love to judge charitably, where there is the least Room for it. But be it so, since this must be done (if done) in such an uncommon Manner, it cannot be attributed to any Thing done by them. But observe, when I speak of a Possibility of some Heathens being saved, I am not considering them as Non-Elect.

In a Word, in whomsoever God works Grace, whether in *Jew or Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, &c.* he works it not for any Worthiness in them, or on the Account of any good Works done by them, but purely for Grace Sake. As in the first Creation, when there was Nothing but a confused *Chaos*, God was pleased to create the Things which now are, when there was Nothing contributed to its Formation but a mere passive Receptiveness of that Form that the Sovereign Creator was pleased to impress upon it: So in this new Creation-Work, God finds Nothing in the Soul to engage him, Nothing in the Soul to help him, yea, he finds much to hinder him, and oppose his Working: So that Man is not only unable to work Grace in himself, and unworthy to have this Grace wrought in him, but unwilling that God should work it. So that in working Grace here is not only the mighty Power of God in implanting it, but also in making us willing to receive it: *Psalm cx. 3. Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power.*

I hope what I have said is enough to convince any impartial Reader, that my Design herein is not to discourage any from a right Use of Means, but to prevent them from Idolizing those Means, and making Saviours of them: 'Tis to set the Means on a right Foot; and that when Sinners have done their All, they may see what a Dependance they have on the free Grace of the Spirit to sanctifie them, (since the Spirit as the Wind bloweth where it listeth) and on the free Grace of God thro' the Righteousness of Christ for their Justification; without which, all their Endeavours, could they do a Thousand Times more than they do or can do, avail Nothing. What I have said is, that I might as an Instrument in God's Hand bring the Blind by a Way that they have not known; that Sinners might not spend all their Labour in that which satisfieth not; and that the Father may have all the Glory due to him in Electing, the Son the Glory due to him in Redeeming, and the Spirit of God no less the Glory due to him in Sanctifying; and that these Blessed THREE, that so agree as ONE touching our Salvation, may not be set at an irreconcilable Difference. The contrary Opinion, as it derogates from the free Grace of God, so it

leaves each Person under the greatest Uncertainties. The Father is not certain how many shall be saved: Nor is the Son certain how many, or perhaps whether any, shall reap any saving Benefit by his Death: Nor is the Spirit certain how many he shall sanctifie, till he sees how much dead Souls will act, and then he'll quicken them: Unworthy Thoughts of the Blessed Trinity. I shall close this Head with one Text that fully proves the Agreement between the Father in Electing, the Son in Dying, and the Spirit in Sanctifying; which, when prov'd, stifles all those Uncertainties that the contrary Opinion is attended with: *John xvi. 13, 14, 15. Howbeit, when the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: Nor was Man to teach him what to speak; no surely, but Christ; hence v. 14. he shall glorifie me, for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you: To shew that the Spirit in his Influences and sanctifying Operations was to act pursuant to what Christ had done in Redeeming, and was to sanctifie no more; and adds, v. 15. All Things that the Father hath are mine, therefore said I that he shall take of mine and shew it unto you: To shew, That as the Spirit was to act in Sanctifying, pursuant to what Christ had done in Redeeming, and to sanctifie neither more nor less, so the Son in Redeeming was to act pursuant to what the Father had done in Electing; to redeem them, and none but them. As if he had said, tho' I call all these Things mine which he is to work in such as he sanctifies, because I purchased that Grace that is thus to be wrought in them, as well as redeem'd their Persons, yet all comes originally from my Father; and as he communicated all his Love and Grace to his Elect by me, so do I all my Love thro' the Spirit. What Room now is here for these Uncertainties? Can this Threefold Cord be broken by a wither'd Arm of Flesh? Shall God or the Creature determine who shall be saved? See what these fair Shews in the Flesh are come unto; and whether these Friends of Universal Redemption, by whatsoever Names dignified or distinguished, under all these Pretences of Enlarging the Grace of God, do not as he that betray'd his Lord with a Kiss!*

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But did not Christ lay down a Price sufficient to save more than the Elect, that they might reap the Benefit thereof if they would believe? Doth not the Scripture expressly say, *1 John ii. 2. And he is the Propitiation for our Sins; and not for ours only, but also for the Sins of the whole World?* Now what other Sense can be put upon the Words, but that Christ hath actually redeemed the whole World, or at least hath paid a Price sufficient to that End? To this I answer, The Key to let us into the true Meaning of the Text is, to know what is design'd by the [whole World;] which, when rightly understood, will be of no Service to the Cause for which it is brought, nor do us any Harm. The Chapter begins thus: *My little Children, these Things write I unto you that ye sin not; and if any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, &c.* He directs his Exhortation to the Children of God, or such as he had been made instrumental to beget to the Lord thro' the Gospel; as *1 Cor. iv. 15.* and his Exhortation is, not to sin: But withall lets them know that though they could not be wholly free from Sin while here, yet this should not discourage them from striving against it; because such as truly bewail'd the Remainers of Sin, had an Advocate to take off the Accusations that might be brought against them on that Account: And to let them know, that this was not a Privilege peculiar only to them present; he adds, *and not for our Sins only, &c.* And that it was a Privilege that all the Children of God, thro' the whole World, in all Places, and at all Times, might lay Claim to, and take Comfort in: And what Service can this Sense do to that Cause? Nor is this the only Place where by the World, or all the World, we are to understand a Part thereof; *John xii. 19. Perceive ye not how ye prevail Nothing, behold the World is gon after him:* When at that Time there were many doing all they could to oppose him, whose uttermost Endeavours could not prevail. So *Luke ii. 1. There went out a Decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the World should be taxed;* and yet that Decree extended not further than the Roman Empire. If Christ is the Saviour of the World in the Sense that some would pretend, How strange is it that he should say, as *John xvii. 9.*

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I pray not for the World, but for them thou hast given me? What would he die for 'em, and not pray for 'em? Did he think his Breath more worth than his Blood?

And whereas it was queried, Did not Christ lay down a Price sufficient for the Non-Elect? I answer, If by a sufficient Price they mean that if he had design'd it for them as well as for the Elect, that then the same Price was sufficient for both, it may be safely granted; and I think cannot be denied, without Disparaging the Son of God: But be it so, unless here was a Design to make over this Sufficiency to such, it makes nothing to the Case in hand. To illustrate this thus; A noble Man hath a vast Estate, a poor Man by him wants Bread, yea is much in Debt; a Friend comes to the poor Man, and says, Cheer up, this Nobleman is able to pay thy Debts, and to enrich thee: But unless he can assure him that he is willing as well as able, it can afford but cold Comfort to this poor Man; he may starve for all his Sufficiency, and die in Prison. So in the present Case, we own that the Sufferings of Christ were sufficient to have saved all the World, yea and all the Devils in Hell, had Christ seen it good to make over the Vertue thereof to them as to his Elect; but for Want of a Will so to do, the former reap no saving Benefit from it, nor can they take any real Comfort in it: And especially when they know there is no such Will in Christ, and that he cannot change his Mind, all Things with respect to the Salvation of Souls being settled by an unalterable Decree. And thus these Universalists, who pretend to encourage the whole World, and each individual Soul therein, with Hopes of Salvation, do but deceive the World, and give 'em a Scorpion to sting 'em, instead of an Egg to nourish 'em; and all their fair Speeches are only swelling Words of Vanity from Men of corrupt Minds, who seem reprobate concerning the Faith: Not to say, such as lie in Wait to deceive.

Obj. But doth not Christ promise, *Matt. vii. 7. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be open'd unto you?* *Ans.* This is spoken to the Children of God, as *ver. 11*, and so makes nothing as to the Matter in hand. But it may be asked, What

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can be said to *Isa. lv. 7? Let the Wicked forsake his Way, and the Unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, &c.* *Ans.* Here indeed he speaks to the Wicked, and assures such that upon their returning to God they shall find Mercy; And who, except the Devil himself, ever pretended to deny this? Some of the Elect lie among the Wicked, and they only shall return. But can any one Text of Scripture be produced where God promises to a Non-Elect Person, that if he improves his natural Power, that then God will give him special and saving Grace? To say any Thing, or prove any Thing short of this, is but to beat the Air. As God never designed to give saving Grace to such as he hath not elected, on any Terms whatsoever, so Men have no Warrant from Scripture to assure any that he will: 'Tis dangerous to say *thus saith the Lord*, when he hath not spoken it: Nor can it be expected that the God of Truth will bless Lies for the Conversion of Souls, whatever specious Shews they may be colour'd over with; Lies may make Hypocrites, but Truth only makes Christians. Thus when 'tis said, *Prov. i. 23. Turn you at my Reproof, behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you:* This only proves that such as do return, upon returning may expect greater Measures of the Spirit; but proves nothing that a Non-Elect Person can return without, or with the Assistance of the Spirit.

Some may further urge, *Matt. xi. 12. The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence, and the Violent take it by Force.* *Ans.* We are not to understand these Words as if Heaven was taken by Storm, or that God was forced to let such in as offer'd Violence to that End; but to shew that the Preaching of *John* was attended with such powerful Operations of the Spirit, as put Persons upon the uttermost Endeavours to get to Heaven. But before this can prove the Point it is brought for, namely, That if Men will do all they can to improve common Grace, then God will give special Grace, and then Glory; or that the Non-Elect may be saved if they will do all they can to that End: I say, before it can serve to prove that, two Things must be taken for granted. 1. That those that offered this Violence were devoid of the Grace of God,

God, which to do would be to offer Violence to that Text; which is to shew what powerful Effusions of the Spirit and Grace of God did accompany the Ministry of *John*, and that did animate Souls to force their Way to Heaven thro' Men and Devils that did all they could to hinder them. And 2. That those violent Persons were not elected, for the Enquiry is concerning them: But as 'tis evident these Persons acted under the special Influences of the Spirit of God filling them with Courage and Resolution to encounter with all the Opposition they might meet with, so their being so influenced prov'd them elected; and so this Text doth no Service to the Cause it is brought for: Yea, it rather militates against it, by proving that such only shall enter into Heaven as under the Influence of special Grace do their utmost in order thereunto. And thus have I finished my Sixth Proposition, and First General, which was to prove, That God of his mere Grace chose some from Eternity.

General II. Is to clear the Righteousness of God in this Matter, and to answer the Objections the carnal World are raising against it. Men have a natural Prejudice against this Doctrine; but before I come to try the Strength of their Objections, I shall confirm one Thing as a sure Foundation to build upon, which is this; That it is impossible for God to be Unrighteous: And if I prove this, a small Matter may prove that he is not Unrighteous in this or that Particular. *Psal. xcii. 15. There is no Unrighteousness in him:* There is none, because there can be none. And I shall confirm this, not only from Scripture, but from Topicks of Reason, since the Opposers of Divine Revelation have such a profound Veneration for it; for Scripture Proofs will not do with some Men. Now as some Law is the Rule of all Righteousness, so all Unrighteousness must be a violating of some Law, to which such Persons ought to be subject: 'Tis no Unrighteousness in Men in one Kingdom, to act contrary to some Laws of another; because not subject to those Laws. Now the Apostle tells us, *Rom. iv. 15. For where no Law is, there is no Transgression:* But God is under no Law, therefore cannot be justly charged with any

any Unrighteousness. He can't be charged herewith as violating any human Laws: For tho' 'tis evident he hath acted contrary to such Laws, by acquitting some that by human Laws were condemn'd, as in the Three Children, and *Daniel*, &c. so on the contrary, by condemning such as by human Laws have been acquitted, yet not Unrighteous in either, For who gave Men Power to make Laws for God? *Job ix. 12. Who will say unto him, what doest thou?* God's Will is the Law, and only Law he acts by: *Rom. xi. 34, 35, 36. Who hath been his Counsellor? Or who hath first given to him?* And adds, *For of him, and thro' him, and to him, are all Things.* This King of Kings is above all Laws; he makes Laws to all, but is under no Law: 'Tis our Unrighteousness to charge God with any. Is it, or can it be thought a Thing reasonable that the Almighty God should be summon'd to the Bar of his Creatures? *Job xxxiv. 18. Is it fit to say to a King, thou art wicked?* Much less to charge God as Unrighteous, who is Righteous in all his Works. When that Spirit was going to utter these Words, *Shall mortal Man be more just than God? Shall a Man be more pure than his Maker?* It made that good Man to say, *Fear came upon me, and Trembling, which made all my Bones to shake; Job iv. 14, 17. So Rom iii. 4. Let God be true, but every Man a Lier:* So let God be Righteous, and every one that opposes it Liers. Let us rather call in question the Righteousness of the whole World, for *Humanum est errare*, than call in question the Righteousness of God.

And as God cannot be charged with Unrighteousness as violating the Laws of Men, being not subject thereunto; so neither as acting contrary to his own Law. The Law of God is either his written Word, or his essential Will; but he cannot be unrighteous as acting contrary to either of these. Not as acting contrary to his Word: If his Word proves any Thing true, it also proves the Thing righteous, and God righteous therein. Nor can God be unrighteous as acting contrary to his essential Will, seeing his willing a Thing to be done is his doing it: Nor can he be compell'd to act contrary to his Will; for then that which compell'd him must be greater than he, and

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consequently must be God; for whatsoever is Supreme, is God. And thus I hope I have left no Room for Objections; but since he that is above all Law is pleased to condescend to give a Reason of his Proceedings, as *Iſa. v. 3. Judge I pray you betwixt me and my Vinyard*, I shall answer for God, tho' he is best able to answer for himself. All that acknowledge the Being of a God, must and will own him righteous in all he doth; and will rather deny the Truth of those Things which they think reflect on his Righteousness, than question his Righteousness in so doing. They will not deny the Righteousness of God in electing, but they rather deny such an Election. So that I am both to clear his Righteousness, and prove that he is righteous in electing. Having already proved the Thing, I shall answer Something by Way of Objection.

Obj. Is it not Unrighteousness in God to decree to save one, and not to save another; when all were made by him, and equally foreseen involv'd in Sin and Misery; and to decree to bring such to Heaven as never deserved it, any more than such as never will come there?

Ans. I shall take the Objection into its Parts, and if I can answer them, I hope this Doctrine will stand as a Rock that can't be moved by all the Batteries raised against it by the Strength of Reason.

1. 'Tis objected, That God chuses one, and not another; and doth more for one, than he doth for another.

Ans. True, he doth so; and that without the least Stain to his Righteousness, seeing what he thus gives is his own: Hence, when they murmured that came early into the Vinyard, because as much was given to them that came later, the Master justifies his Proceedings, and put them to Shame and Silence, by saying, as *Matt. xx. 15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?* God allows us this Liberty in Things lawful, and shall we deny it to him? Hear O Heavens! Do not all Ranks of Men take this Liberty, as that which the Law of God and Nature allows? To withhold from any what is his Due is unrighteous, because that Thing is not ours, but *de Jure* his to whom it's due, and from whom it's withheld: But when a Thing is properly ours, we have a Right

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Right to dispose of it as we please. Look, as when several Malefactors are condemned for the same Crime, and are equally Subjects, the King as a Sovereign can pardon one, and not another: He is kind to him that he pardons, but not unjust to him that dies. Or we see a King bestows a Place of Profit to one, and not to another. Nay, Do not we do the same? We give to one Beggar at our Door, and another we send empty away; or do not give to all alike: Yet don't think ourselves unrighteous in so doing. Nay, as to our Children, that are equally near and dear, we do the same. Men bequeath more to one than to another; not because he to whom they give most hath always pleased them best, but because they will do so. Thus we see how natural it is to Man to claim a Kind of Sovereignty: And shall we, dare we, deny that to God that we take, and he gives to ourselves? Suppose one should go to a King, and say, Thou shalt not pardon one, unless thou pardon all; or thou shalt not give such a Place of Profit to some, unless thou givest the same to all thy Subjects: What Folly and Presumption would it be, and scarce consistent with a right Mind. And is God the only Person to be contradicted? Shall we direct him to whom he shall give the Kingdom? Is it not Presumption eno' for any to think they can save themselves, but will they direct God as to his saving of others? Says God, as to the Point in Hand, *Rom. ix. 21. Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay, of the same Lump to make one Vessel to Honour, and another to Dishonour?* Mind, tho' of the same Lump: And hath not God the same Power over us? *Isa. lxiv. 8. But now, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the Clay, thou art our Potter: Jer. xviii. 6. As the Clay is in the Hand of the Potter, so are ye in mine Hand, O House of Israel!* God gives to one in a Way of Grace, and denies to another as worthy, to shew it was of Grace; the former has Cause to be thankful, the latter no Cause to complain: God is a Sovereign God, and doth what he will. *Isa. xlv. 10. My Counsel shall stand, and I will do all my Pleasure.* If it is Unrighteousness in God to dispose of his own, it must be much more so in us. But how easie is it for some to see a Mote in the Eye of

another, than a Beam in their own? Should any pretend to dispose of what is ours, what Injustice should we think it?

2d Part of the Objection. God saves such as no Ways deserved it: Had he brought only such to Heaven as deserved it, it would have been righteous so to do; but to bring such to Heaven that no more deserved it than those that never come there, yea that deserve the hottest Place in Hell, Where is the Righteousness of this?

Ans. I fear indeed this is the Burden of all, Men would be Self-Saviours; whereas this Method God takes is to glorifie his Grace, and debase Men: The less Man deserves, the brighter Grace shines in his Salvation. If the Righteousness of God is not blemished in disposing of what is his own, to be sure it can't in disposing of it to the most Unworthy. As for Men to bestow their Kindness on such as are unworthy, is an Act Praise-worthy, and more than if they had not been so: So that I cannot see why that which is a Virtue in Man should be culpable in God, or once thought so. If God had saved none but such as deserved it, the whole Race of Man must have perished; it being impossible for fallen Man to merit a Blessing. I can't but think that they that are so strenuous to Rase the Foundation that God has laid, do it that upon another they may erect a *Babel*, whose Heighth may reach to Heaven, with their own untempered Slime and Mortar. They that do not desire to be saved by Grace, must desire to be saved by Works: If they will grant our Salvation to be by Grace, Why may it not be attributed to the Grace of God before Time as well as in Time?

But before I can finish this General, I shall clear some few Texts of Scripture that are urged against, and that seem to frown upon this Doctrine I have been confirming. The first is *Acts* x. 34, 35. *Of a Truth I perceive, God is no Respector of Persons; but in every Nation, he that feareth God, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him.* To this I answer, To understand this as if God did not love some more than others, or bestow greater Blessings on some than others, which are the only Things under our present Enquiry, is to oppose both Experience

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perience and expresse Scripture. It is contrary to common Experience. Who is there that knows his Right-Hand from his Left but must see this? How differing are the Circumstances of Men in this World: One is advanced to sit upon the Throne, another grinds behind the Mill. One is rich as *Abraham*, another poor as *Job* when all was gon, and yet Providence disposes all. So as to Grace: One is with *Abraham* strong in the Faith, another full of Fears; crying with Tears, *Lord, I believe, help thou my Unbelief*: And yet the same God that worketh all. So as to Scripture: We read of a rich Man in Hell tormented, and of a poor Man in *Abraham's* Bosom comforted: We read of some received to the Right-Hand, saying, *Come you Blessed*; and of others sent down to the Left, with a *Go you Cursed*. But to come if possible yet nearer, and to name one Text instead of many, 'tis said, *Gen. iv. 4. And the Lord had Respect to Abel, and to his Offering*: And dare any be so bold, or can they be so ignorant, after all, as to deny that God respects some above others? Would not the very Text they cite in Favour of their Cause be a swift Witness again them to condemn them, while it loudly declares that only such as in every Nation fear the Lord, and work Righteousness, are accepted, and how few are they? Is there no Way of interpreting such Texts, but to deny one to confirm the other? Yes surely; therefore when he is said to respect some, it proves that he hath a greater Love to, and bestows greater Blessings on them than others: When he is said not to respect; 'tis to shew that he doth not set his Love upon, or give those Blessings to any for any Worthiness he saw in them, nor any Works done by them. He did not accept them for their Riches, or for Titles of Honour, but that all was of pure Grace; which is so far from weakening the Truth that I am upon, that it so confirms it, that I may say, What Need of any further Witness?

Another Text brought against the electing of some only, is, *1 Tim. iv. 10. Who is the Saviour of all Men, especially those that believe?* And now they sing Victory; and think it impossible to reconcile this Text to the Doctrine of Election and Reprobation, unless we suppose
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Christ died to redeem and save some that the Father decreed to damn. But whether this Text bears the least Ill-will to this Doctrine of Election, or is not much rather an Advocate for it, falls now under Consideration. Some Men are so unhappy as to bring such Scriptures to confute others, which serve only to confound themselves. Now, when he says Christ is the Saviour, especially of those that believe, I take it for granted that he is a Saviour to them as he is not to Unbelievers, or else that he wrote with a Design not to be understood: For how can there be a Specialty annexed to them, if all others, or but any others have the same Salvation with them? It will be necessary therefore to inquire where the true Difference lies. Will any say, as I once heard a learned Man affirm, That the Difference lies in this; Believers shall have a greater Degree of Glory, and Unbelievers a lesser? Such a Sense (if any in it) is utterly repugnant to the whole Current of Scripture, while it makes all the World to be intitled to Heaven, tho' not to the same Degree of Glory, and so Hell will be an empty Place. No Unbelievers there; tho' 'tis said, *Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth not, shall be damn'd*; and that *they shall not see Life*. I hope such Interpreters will not oppose the Doctrine of the Saints Perseverance; seeing in their Opinion, Sinners cannot come short of Heaven unless they have better Thoughts of the latter than of the former, as I doubt not but some have. But some think to mend the Matter by saying, That Christ is the Saviour of those that believe absolutely, of all others conditionally. If by absolutely they mean that God saves such without any Regard to the Presence of Faith, Repentance, &c. 'tis manifestly false, even from the Text itself, which joins their Faith and Salvation together; to shew the Necessity of the former, in order to the latter. But if by absolutely they mean that God will certainly and absolutely work those Things in such as he hath elected, by his Spirit, which he requires of them as necessary to Salvation, we will let that pass as sound Doctrine, and only call in question what this conditional Salvation means, and what are those Conditions. But I may save the Labour here by shewing that Christ cannot be the Saviour of any,

any Terms, that for my Reasons cannot be fulfilled, and are not so. I will suppose these Conditions to be Faith, and Repentance, &c. but 'tis impossible that Christ can be a Saviour to such till they can and do actually believe, and repent; those being the very Things without which they were not to be saved; as the Word *Conditional*, in the mildest Sense of the Word, implies. Saviour and Saved are Relates, which are *simul Natura*, together in Nature; and a Man may as well be call'd a Husband that has no Wife, as Christ be call'd a Saviour to such as never are actually Saved. And as 'tis not any conditional Proposals to a Woman that makes the Man her Husband, unless the Marriage is actually consummated; so 'tis not any Condition not performed by us that makes Christ a Saviour to us. To talk of Man's being saved on such Conditions as Man of himself cannot perform, and that God resolves not to enable him to perform, is Talk indeed, and can yield but cold Comfort to such. If Christ is the Saviour of all Men, then he saves all that die in their Sins; and the Heathen World that never heard of Salvation by Christ; yea, and the Damned, for they must come in among the [All]. Never let any say they perished for not performing the Conditions; for Christ is a Saviour, or no Saviour. He that can offer such Violence to Scripture and Reason, as to believe that Christ is a Saviour to such as are not saved, let him; 'tis easie to see who hath blinded his Eyes. The Salvation of the Soul takes in our Deliverance from Hell, and bringing that Soul to Heaven; but how Christ can be a Saviour in that Sense to such as never are deliver'd from the former, or brought to the latter, is even amazing to me to conceive! So that the Salvation that Christ works out for such as never believe, can't be a Soul-Salvation, but a Temporal and Corporal Salvation; in delivering them from many Temporal and Corporal Evils, and in bestowing Temporal and Corporal Good Things. And thus the Word *Salvation* is often used in Scripture, as 1 Sam. xiv. 45. *Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great Salvation in Israel?* So 1 Sam. xi. 13. *For to Day the Lord hath wrought Salvation in Israel:* In both which, and many like Texts of Scripture, nothing of the

the Salvation of the Soul can be meant. To understand it in this Sense runs smooth, and free from all Objection; For who can deny but by Means of Christ's Death Unbelievers do receive many good Things, as to this Life, which otherwise they would not have enjoy'd? But to understand this of the Eternal Salvation of the Soul, carries in it such a Self-Contradiction, and is clogg'd with so many and such gross Absurdities, as may make any Man endued with Reason, and especially with the least Beam of Divine Light, even to nauseate.

And thus I hope I have discharged this Text from that hard and unwilling Service it was prest in; and shewn it bears no ill Will to the Doctrine of Election or Reprobation; but much rather speaks aloud for both, while it proves how great the Happiness of some is, if compared with others: As *Esau* had many good Things of this World, but *Jacob* got the Blessing. If but few are made Partakers of this special Salvation, 'tis because but few believe; and if but few believe, 'tis because but few were chose. This Difference in God's dispensing his Favours and Blessings in Time, clearly proves his differing Purposes before Time. Had he not had a special Love to such as he enables to believe, he would never have wrought so great a Work in 'em, or bestow'd so great a Blessing upon 'em, or decreed so great a Salvation for 'em. The Difference between those that believe, and all others, as to the Kindness God bestows on both, is as great as between Heaven and Earth. And thus I have finished this General Head, and come to

General III. Having stated the Truth, and clear'd the Righteousness of God therein; I come to examine the contrary Opinion, and to shew, That it as much reflects on the Righteousness of God and some other of his Attributes, as This can be suppos'd to do, and more. And here I will suppose God to be capable of Unrighteousness, tho' I deny that he is so, for 'tis in vain to prove he is not so in this, if he is supposed incapable of being so in any Thing. And indeed the Men of this Age are not the only Persons that have call'd in question the Righteousness of God in saving Souls. The Text hints thus much.

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much: What need he go about to clear his Righteousness, if others had not endeavour'd to stain it? So *Romans* iii. 5. *Is God unrighteous who taketh Vengeance? I speak as a Man;* not as a Christian, but in the Language of the carnal World. And indeed such a Question becomes not a Christian's Mouth, unless to confute it. Well then, to speak after the Manner of Men, I shall shew that the contrary Opinion as much reflects on God's Righteousness, and on his Sincerity, as this can do.

Say they, God chuses none till they chuse him; he bears equal good Will to all Men: That any perish, is not for Want of a Will in God to save them; but owing to their not improving their Talents.

But consider, in Answer to this, *Rom. ix. 16. So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth Mercy.* Now, in running, Men put forth all their Strength and Skill to win the Prize, yet this will not do here: Yea, tho' to this they make Use of all that Freedom of Will that some so glory in, yet neither will this do; nor both put together; but all is resolved into the pure Mercy of God. I wonder how any dare thus shut their Eyes against the Light shining in that Text! These make God to propose Heaven to all on Terms impossible to be performed without special Grace, which he resolves not to give, or at least refuses to do it, and punishes them eternally for not doing. Now doth not this as much reflect on the Righteousness of God, as the contrary Opinion can do? By this Scheme he gives special Grace to one, and not to another; by that he chuses some from Eternity, and not others. By the latter some perish, being not elected; by the former some perish, as being not effectually call'd and renew'd. If the Righteousness of God is clear in not calling, it must be so in not electing some, and electing others; seeing the Sovereign Grace of God doth equally appear in both: And he that can clear God in the one, must also in the other. But some may say, Tho' God doth not give special Grace to all, yet he gives common Grace to all; which, if they improve; Well, but if not, What then? Why then they and their common Grace may go down to

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Hell together. I must confess I am at a Loss to know what this common Grace is that God gives to every Man, the very Heathen not excepted: Only I perceive 'tis a Thing of no great Value, because such as have it may perish. And how they will prove that every Man (Drunkards and Swearers not excepted) hath this Grace in him, or by what Authority they separate Grace from Glory, when God hath so firmly join'd them together. I fear there's a Mistake in the Case: And as *Jacob* took a Bleer-Eyed *Leah* instead of a beautiful *Rachel*, being in the Dark; so these, by Reason of the Darknes of their Minds, have put this excellent Name of Grace on that deformed Thing SELF; and have made this little Mistake, only to put Darknes for Light, Evil for Good, and Sweet for Bitter. But be it what it will, Why did not God help some to improve it, as he did others? If you say, Because they would not, I further ask, Why did he not make them willing, as he did others? Who is there, but such as have closed their Eyes, but must see how all turns on the Sovereignty of God?

Let me add, the contrary Doctrine more reflects on the Righteousness of God than the Doctrine I affirm can do; for if God is unrighteous (I speak as a Man) because he chose some, and left others to perish, How much more to leave all the World under a Possibility of perishing, as those that deny Election are forced to affirm?

General IV. Is to make some practical Improvement of this first Part: If the Doctrine of Eternal Election is so great a Truth, and the Righteousness of God so clear herein, I shall improve this

1. In a Use of Reproof to several Sorts of Persons.
2. In a Use of Information.

1. It reproves such as deny this to be a Truth, and rack their Wits to evade the Force of those many plain Scriptures that prove it, as if their Salvation depended on the Overthrow of this Doctrine. To deny this, is in Effect to deny the Scripture to be true; for it so great a Part of it is false as speaks in Favour of this Doctrine. Who can tell but the Whole may be so also? They that believe

believe the Prophets, or Apostles, or Christ himself, can't deny this Doctrine. To deny this, is to say all those are Liers. Now as he that adds to God's Word is worthy of Reproof, because he renders the Word an imperfect Rule; so he that takes from it is no less worthy of a Reproof, because he makes it no Rule. What would Men get could they by all Endeavours cancel the Decrees of Heaven, but bring the whole World under a Necessity of perishing; and so reject the Counsel of God against themselves? For as all that are not elected will unavoidably perish; not because not elected, but for their Sin: So, was it not for electing Love, all the Rest might have perished too. And thus, under a Pretence of having all saved, or made salvable, they take the Way what in 'em lies that all may perish: And instead of widening the Grace of God as they pretend, they narrow it till it is brought to Little: since actually and certainly to save a Few contains more Grace than to render a whole World salvable, when mean time 'tis confessed that the same World may be lost and perish eternally. Nor can I see how any can be truly called *Salvable*, of whom God requires Faith, Repentance, and new Obedience, but never intends to work these in 'em. To be salvable, is to be under a Possibility of getting to Heaven; But I would fain know which Way, if God neither elected them, nor works Grace in them? If God did either, they would be more than salvable: If he doth neither, I cannot once conceive how they should be so much.

2. It reproves such as are afraid to own this Truth, or to preach it, tho' called thereunto, and set for the Defence of the Gospel: Who rather study to preach as Men would have them, than to preach the Preaching that God bids them. I am not unsensible what great Discouragements Ministers meet with in this Work, by Reason of the growing Opposition that this Doctrine meets with, even from Professors. But must we be silent because of this? Says *Paul, Gal. i. 10. For do I persuade Men, or God? Or do I seek to please Men? For if I yet pleased Men, I should not be the Servant of Christ.* How is it consistent with Ministerial Fidelity to God, or Soul's, to conceal so great a Part of the Counsel of God? If we do

but please God, we should not be afraid of displeasing Men. If we do not preach this Truth, we take the Way to leave some in Ignorance: For how can we expect People should hear without a Preacher? And hereby we take the Way to harden others in their Errors, by giving them Cause thereby to think we are of their Minds; or that the Arguments we have to use in Defense thereof are so weak, that we are asham'd the World should hear them. Says God to the Prophet, *Ezek. ii. 7. And thou shalt speak my Words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, for they are most rebellious; so Jer. i. 7, 8. and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak: Be not afraid of their Faces; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.* If we would have God with us, we must declare his whole Mind. As he that allows himself in one known Sin deserves not to be called a Christian; so no more doth he deserve the Character of a faithful Minister of Christ that for Fear of Men denies, or but conceals any Part of the Mind of Christ. To preach this Truth is not the Way to get Honour, nor Wealth from Men; but we serve a good Master, who will crown our faithful Service. When *Paul* was going from the People to whom he preached, see how he comforted himself: *Acts xx. 26, 27. Wherefore I take you to record this Day, that I am pure from the Blood of all Men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the Counsel of God.* And as we hope to have Comfort at Death, or Success in our Work, let us imitate him, and not be Cowards in the Cause of Christ; but valiant for the Truth. Concealing this our Truth, is enough to cause God to blast all our Ministry. And indeed I can scarce conceive how any other Truth can long be preached clearly, so long as this is concealed: For as all our Privileges, yea and all our spiritual Performances spring from hence, as our Deliverance from Wrath, and obtaining Salvation; so 'tis not likely we should insist on these to the Satisfaction and Edification of such as are spiritually enlighten'd if we conceal this. What, can we hear so many casting out their base Reflections against this Truth on the one Hand, and see so many far better than they bewailing that this Truth is no more preach'd on the other

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ther Hand, and not be mov'd by the Insults of the former, nor Sighs of the latter, to vindicate this Doctrine? Have not we as much to say for it, as the ignorant World have to say against it? Shall not Wisdom be justified of her own Children, while condemned by a spurious Brood?

There are sad Complaints among the Godly of Want of Success of the Gospel, and the great Decay of the Life and Power of true Godliness; as if Religion was expiring, or the Glory departing: But is it not greatly owing to ourselves? Is not the Spirit of Truth grieved, and therefore departed? As I can't find so much Savour of the Things of God on any Spirits, or so much of true Godliness in the Lives of any, as in these Few that yet hold this Truth in the Love of it; so was this more preached by some, and received by others, we might hope to see better Days. But as the *Psalmist* in another Case not much unlike this, saith, *If the Foundations are destroy'd, What can the Righteous do?* So, if this Foundation-Truth is denied by some, and concealed by others, What can true *Israelites* do but even mourn out their Days in sad Complaints to God? So long as *Jonah* declin'd delivering the Message God sent by him, and ran away, when asleep, he was soon waked by a Storm, and narrowly escaped with his Life, tho' a Prophet: But no sooner did he bewail his Fault, and deliver the Message, and preach the Preaching that God bad him, but he saved a great City from Ruin: *Jon. iii. 1, 2, &c.* So now, if any of God's Ministers decline from the Truth, let them expect a Storm; but not a Whale to save 'em. God blessed his faithful Preaching, and so he will ours; but he hates daubing with untempered Mortar; and a House so built will not stand long. It will be no Comfort to us at Death, nor Honour to our Memory when dead, that we have concealed the Words of the Holy One. If we have received any Light into this Mystery, don't let us put it under a Bushel, but in a Candlestick, that so others may see it. Let us cause the Trumpet to give a clear and certain Sound; and if such as hear it will give no Heed to it, we may deliver our own Souls, tho', it may be, not theirs that hear us.

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3. It reproves such as abuse this Truth, and so make it contemptible to others. To abuse it, is as great a Sin as to deny it. 'Tis Pity (we say) that any good Thing should be abused. Oh, the Extreame that Men run into! Some stand snarling at this Truth; saying as that scoffing *Pilate, What is Truth?* As if he had said, Tell me not of Truth, I care not for it. Others abuse it, while under a Pretence of the highest Love to it, as having their Salvation secured by it, they live a loose and scandalous Life, and continue in Sin to make Room for Grace to abound. Thus the Truth like Christ is crucified between two Thieves, each robbing it of the Honour due to it. But as the Apostle stiles them ungodly Men that dare turn the Grace of God into Lasciviousness, *Jude 4.* so are these. He also tells us in the same Verse, That they were ordained of old, But to what? Not to Salvation, but to Condemnation, as the just Reward of their Sin. Such as thus abuse this Truth, are the most unlikely Persons in the World to receive any saving Benefits by it. Some may deny this to be a Truth for Want of Light, and so are to be pitied: Others may conceal this Truth for Fear of Men: But to believe this to be a Truth, yea, and seem to glory in it, and yet abuse it, is a Sin with a Vengeance! 'Tis a general Rule that admits of no Exception under it; that the clearer our Evidence is of our Interest herein, the holier we shall be. This is so far from encouraging to Sin, that Nothing gives it a more mortal Wound. When the Apostle had told us how the Foundation of God stands sure, which he tells us is this, *The Lord knoweth them that are his,* he immediately subjoins, *and let every one that names the Name of Christ depart from Iniquity;* *2 Tim. ii. 19. 20.* What, dare any hold such a Truth as this in Unrighteousness? Let such read their Doom, *Rom. i. 18. For the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness, and Unrighteousness of Men, who hold the Truth in Unrighteousness:* Such hold the Truth; but 'tis as a Prisoner is held that would fain get away, and be set loose from 'em, when thus abused by 'em. As the Devil holds this Truth, that he may do Mischief by it, so do these. Let such no more lay Claim to an Interest

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rest in this Truth, or live more to the Honour of it, and not be so ungrateful as to make that suffer so much by them which they pretend hath done such great Things for them. 'Tis Pity such should name it in their Mouths, that no more honour it in their Lives. God will say to such, as *Psal. l. 16. But unto the Wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my Statutes, or that thou shouldest take my Covenant in thy Mouth?* O how are many confirmed in their Prejudice against this Truth by the unsuitable Walk of those its false Friends, who do by this as that Wretch *Judas* did by his Lord, when he betray'd him with a Kiss. And 'tis to be fear'd their Place will be the same. See, say the World, what this Doctrine leads to. Who can believe this to be a Truth of God, when its best pretended Friends bring such Dishonour to God? So that God may justly charge the Sins of others who revile this Truth on such, as well as their own Sins in abusing it, and bring that Curse on them that is threatned against such as cause the Blind to wander. Oh! Then let such talk less of it, or walk more agreeably to it; since a vain Walk doth more Hurt to that Truth, than all their smooth Words and flattering Talk can do Good, either to that, or to themselves. Let such vain Talkers pluck off their Mask, with which they have deceived themselves, and others. Thus to abuse this Truth, is to rebel against the Light; to grieve the Spirit of God, and all sincere Lovers of the Truth; and so worthy to fall under the severest Reproofs from what has been spoken.

2d Use shall be of Information. This Fountain sends forth many refreshing Streams pleasant and profitable to wade into.

1st Inference. If God hath thus chosen some, it may shew us what is the Spring of all true Happiness, and Blessedness, even that Love that chose us. Great is the Blessedness of the Saints in this World, and much greater will it be in the World to come. All is now said to be theirs. God is their Father, Christ is their Redeemer, the Spirit is their Sanctifier and Comforter; they are called, pardoned, justified, and preserved, to say Nothing now as to what they shall be. And from whence do

do all these come, but from electing Love and Grace. This is as the great Wheel, to put all the lesser Wheels into Motion. Had we not been elected, we had never been called, pardoned, justified here, or glorified hereafter. Why is one call'd effectually, and not another, that perhaps hears the same Sermon, and sits in the same Seat, but because one is elected, the other not? This is call'd a Foundation, 2 *Tim.* ii. 19. to shew, that as the Foundation is the first Thing in the Building, so is this the Beginning of our Happiness. And also to shew, that as when the Foundation of a House is removed, down comes the House, tho' ever so high and magnificent; so, could this Decree be cancelled, all our Happiness would vanish away. But, blessed be God, this Foundation stands sure, and so doth our Happiness that stands upon it; so that none can deprive us of it. In opposing this Truth, Men not only reject the Counsel of God, but do it against themselves; as *Luke* vii. 30. They go about to sap the Foundation of all our Happiness. The Happiness of Saints, as it was not procured by, so neither doth it depend upon a withering Arm of Flesh, but on the immutable Purpose and Counsel of God; who saith, *Isa.* xli. 10. *My Counsel shall stand, and I will do all my Pleasure.* Thus God declares the *End from the Beginning*, and *from antient Times the Things that are not yet done*: And tho' not yet done, they shall be done, because his Counsel shall stand. Heaven and Earth may sooner pass away, then God change his Mind; *Job* xxiii. 13. *But he is of one Mind, and none can turn him, and what his Soul desireth, even that he doth.* He that decreed our Salvation, and hath begun it, will finish it. He cannot forget them in Time, that lay so near his Heart before Time.

2d Inference. From God's chusing some to Salvation, I infer how great the Subtilty of *Satan* is to take Advantage from hence to do Mischief to Souls, and that he should make Use of this Truth to strengthen his Interest, that is so directly levelled against it. Look as God brings Good out of Evil, by taking Occasion from the Sin of Man to bring in his Son as a Saviour, without which we should not have needed him; So this Evil Spirit makes

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this a Handle to support his Interest, tho' the Grace of God is so revealed herein : But as the great Wisdom of God was seen in the former, so the great Subtilty of *Satan* is seen in the latter, and this he doth two Ways.

1st, By persuading Sinners to continue longer in Sin; because, says he, if they are elected (and they know not but they are) God will bring them Home whatever Prodigals they have been; as *Paul*, tho' a Persecutor, yet being a chosen Vessel he was converted in the Height of his Rage. And how many have on this Account deferr'd Repentance till too late? He that at first told them it was too soon, hath after told them it was too late, and that the Door of Mercy was now shut. Now he suggests, that had they been elected, they should never have liv'd so long in Sin, or withstood so many sweet Calls. And 2^{dly} he makes Use of this Truth to discourage such as are returning to God, tho' it never was design'd to that End. O, says *Satan*, do what you will, or can, if not elected, all is in vain. And O what a Stumbling-Block hath this been to many; and this having a Shew of Truth in it, is the more hardly withstood: Yet he is wont to mix his Lies with the Truth: If all he says were true, it would scarce do us any Harm; if Lies, they would not do him any Good; for who would then give Credit to him? O what Need to have our Loins girt about with Truth.

3^d Inference. It informs us how great their Sin must be that speak against this Truth. If so sinful as you have heard not to preach it up, it must be more sinful to cry it (not to say preach it) down. *Satan* himself will plead for this Truth to do Mischief, but some will not do so much as he. If *Satan* should oppose this Truth 'tis no Wonder, since it hath been so destructive to his Interest: By that Means he hath lost many of his Prisoners. When the Disciples came to Christ saying, *Lord, even the Devils are subject to us thro' thy Name*, he answered, *I beheld Satan fall, &c. Luke x. 17, 18.* As if he had said, I foresaw that long ago in my eternal Purposes of Love and Grace to my chosen ones: And added, *v. 20. Notwithstanding in this rejoice, not that the Spirits are subject to you; but rather rejoice, because your Names are written in Heaven.* As if he had said, they had

never been subject to you, or you to me, if your Names had not been written in Heaven; therefore let that be your Rejoicing. So that it need not seem strange that *Satan* is so angry with such as clearly preach this Doctrine, and such an Enemy to the Doctrine itself; but for Men to quarrel at it is amazing, since all their Happiness comes in at this Door. If not elected, we had never been called, never justified here, or glorified hereafter; and yet for Man to be offended at it, as if it was the Bane of Mankind, is very strange. Such little think who it is that stands behind them to prompt them on. What, suck Poison out of one of the sweetest Flowers in the Paradise of God! What, stumble at such a precious Stone! Sure such must be blind indeed.

But why should it seem strange that Men are now so offended at this Doctrine, and such as are sincere Lovers of it, when they were as much offended with Christ and his Doctrine, who spake as never Man spake? 'Tis hard to say, what clear Gospel-Truth the carnal World will embrace: The more clearly the Grace of God shines forth in any Truth, the more contrary it is to our corrupt Nature. *Satan* loves to see Souls imbibe such Doctrine that will do them no Good, or him or his Interest any Harm.

4th Inference. Has God thus chosen Some to Salvation, how should our Thoughts be taken up in the Study of this deep Mystery? Oh 'tis a pleasant Study, to see how the Thoughts of God were about us before we had a Being! to see how all Christ's Members were written in his Books, when as yet there were none of them. This is one of the deep Things of God, and therefore we have need to look to the Teachings of the Spirit of God herein. 'Tis sad to think what Ignorance is in many of the true Nature hereof, which Ignorance of it I take to be the Cause of that Prejudice that is in many against it. Let it not suffice that we believe it to be a Truth, but let us dive deeper thereinto. We may chance meet with such shocking Temptations in this Matter, as our clearest Knowledge we can have may be little enough to secure us against. 'Tis true, after the great Scrutiny we shall have Cause to cry out, *O the Depth!*

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Depth! The right Understanding hereof will endear this Truth to us.

Obj. Is it not said, *Deut. xxix. 29. The secret Things belong unto the Lord, but those Things which are revealed belong to us and to our Children:* Election is a secret Thing, and therefore better never trouble our Heads about it, than study what we can never comprehend.

Ans. Election, as to the exact Number and the Names, is a secret Thing that only belongs to the Lord; he only in this Sense knows them that are his: Nor is this the Thing I am exhorting to: But that some are elected is no secret Thing, but revealed in the clearest Light, that he that runs may read it, and therefore belongs to us; and it is as much our Sin not to know this, as to pretend to know the former. This belongs to us, is our Duty to know; not to know this is to shut our Eyes against the Light, and as great a Sin as to pry too curiously into secret Things. God hath revealed this, that it may be known; and what may be known, and ought to be known, must be our Sin not to know.

5th Inference. How highly doth it concern us to make sure that we are interested in this Truth? We shall plead but coldly for it, till we can see our Interest in it. To believe the Thing, and not have some comfortable Evidence of an Interest in it, will but increase our Sorrow; to think that others will be saved, but we may perish for ought we know: Meer Head-Notions will save none. O it will be dreadful to go to Hell with the Knowledge of divine Truths in our Heads, and Notions of them in our Mouths, for want of an Interest in them and Savour of them in our Hearts. We may firmly believe the Necessity of Regeneration, and be able in some Measure to tell what it is, and yet perish for want of feeling it wrought in our Hearts. We may firmly believe that Christ is a Saviour, yea the only Saviour, and yet never be saved by him. So as to Election, we may firmly believe the Thing to be true, and wonder at, and pity the Blindness of such as deny it, and yet never be saved by it. 'Tis not my Design to prove such cannot be elected,

or saved without Assurance of either; but to shew how much it tends to our Comfort to know this, and also to shew how little Head-Notions of the best Truths will avail, if we have not a Savour of them and a real Interest in them. Hence says the Apostle, 2 Pet. i. 10, 11. *Wherefore the rather, Brethren, give Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure; that is, sure to them; and adds, if ye do these Things, ye shall never fall, &c.* To see our Names written in Heaven, will compensate our greatest Diligence. 'Tis owing I fear in great Measure to the want of Assurance of this, that there are so many Cavillers at this Truth; they that can see this will be as loth to let this Truth go, as others can be to receive it.

But may some say, How may I know this? This is what I have been longing for and praying for, O when shall it once be, that all my Doubts may be dissolved? O when will this Day break, and these Shadows flee away? To this great Question I answer, The Spirit of God can only satisfy as to this: When he comes and bears witness to our Spirits, all our Doubts will flee away as the Mists before the rising Sun. As he was present in these eternal Counsels, so he best knows who are chosen; and without his Witnessing, all Marks and Signs will be doubtful. As we cannot tell what a Clock it is by the largest Figures on a Sun-Dial, yea, tho' written in Gold, except the Sun shine upon them, *nisi Sol lucet nihil* is a fit Motto thereon; so here God only reveals this unto us by his Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. Let Grace be true, and our Interest be ever so certain in it as to the Reality of the Thing, yet if the Spirit of God doth not shine in upon his Work, and satisfy us that it is his Work, all round about us will be dark and doubtful. Says the Soul, I have found a Change, but whether saving or not I want to know. I find something like Grace in me; but when I consider how far some have gon that had no true Grace, *hinc Lacrymæ*. Thus the poor Soul is held in Suspense, hanging as it were between Heaven and Hell: Sometimes Faith prevails, and sometimes black Fears, till the Spirit comes and scatters them; but tho' this is his Work, yet he never doth it without the Presence of those

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Qualifications which flow from Election, and are necessary in order to Salvation: And he that pretends to the former without the latter, knows not what Spirit he is acted by, and proves himself to be under strong Delusions, and given up to believe a Lie. The Scripture is that by which the Spirit teaches, and by that thro' his Assistance we are to judge of ourselves; and therefore I shall lay down some Scripture Evidences of our Election, and such as can find them ought to rejoice, to think that so surely as these Characters are written in their Hearts, so surely their Names are written in Heaven.

1st. We may know our Election by our effectual Vocation. Hence 2 Pet. i. 11. *Give Diligence to make your Calling sure*; not make sure of our Election first, but our Calling. God begins at Election, and descends downward; we must begin at our Calling, and so ascend Step by Step. Now this Call is not an outward Call only, as when God speaks to our Ear in the outward Ministration of his Word; for so, many are called that are not chosen; but it is an inward and effectual Call to the Heart, set home by the Spirit, whereby we are enabled to embrace the outward Call in the Word: The Doors of the Heart fly open to receive the joyful Sound. Now says the Soul, *Speak Lord, for thy Servant heareth*. Now the Soul not only hears with the Ear, but he understands what he heareth: Now these Truths which before were rejected, or which lay floating in the Head, sink down into the Heart, and make a lively and lasting Impression there. The Soul has a sweet Savour of Divine Truths, such as it never had before; and as this is the true Nature of the Thing, so where it is, it proves us elected. As all that are of the Number of the Elect shall be thus called, so all that are thus called are certainly of that Number: Hence Rom. viii. 30. *Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called*: All them, none but them. But have we found this by Experience? Has God unstop'd our deaf Ears? Have we heard the Voice of Christ causing us to live? John, v. 25. We are in a dead State till thus call'd by Grace; but by this Call he puts Life into us: As he said to Lazarus when dead, *Come forth*, and he did so. O the Power

Power of this Voice! Now it is as with *Lydia* when her Heart was opened, she attended to what was spoken, *Acts*, xvi. 14. Now if this Call hath reached thy Heart, thou hast a sure Evidence of thy Election. If God had not chosen thee before Time, he had never thus called thee in Time.

2dly. We may know our Election by our real Sanctification and Obedience to the Law of God. By this we may know that the witnessing Spirit was a true Spirit. Tho' some may think it Presumption to call in question the Spirit, yet see 1 *John* iv. 3, 2. *Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they are of God.* The Spirit of God is not unwilling to be try'd by the Word of God; tho' a false Spirit is afraid to come under divine Scrutiny, and is for having all taken upon his Word: I doubt not but the Devil is the Author of some Mens Comfort and Assurance. When the *Jews* boasted that God was their God, Christ tells them, *John*, viii. 44. *Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Lusts of your Father ye will do.* You see from their doing the Works of the Devil, he not only proved that they belong to him, but that they had their false Assurance from him, and O how fast doth he hold such? And this he may do as he is a lying Spirit in the Mouths of his Ministers, to lay down false Signs of true Grace. And sure I am, the Assurance of such as are not sanctified can't be of God: For tho' the Spirit sanctifies such as he may not have sealed, yet he never seals such as he hath not first sanctified. Now tho' good Works were not the Cause of our Election, yet (if they are good indeed) they prove we are elected: Not when we began to work, but before the Work began. As God, when he chose Salvation as the End, chose Sanctification as the Means; so where he works the latter, it proves the former. As God brings none to Heaven but such as he first fits for it, so he will shut none of them out in whom he has wrought that Fitness. So that true Holiness of Heart and Life is a *Medium*, from whence we may look backward and see our Election, and forward and see our Salvation, and an equal Evidence of both. 1 *Peter* i. 2. *Elect according to the Foreknowledge of God the Father, through Sanctification of the Spirit* 22-

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to Obedience. So *2 Thess. ii. 13.* ——— *Because God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation, thro' Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth.* So that if we can but find that God has written his Law in our Hearts, and enables us to conform to it in our Lives, we ought to take this as a good Proof of our Election: For as the End cannot be attain'd without the Means appointed, so no more can the Means be finally separated from the true Cause thereof.

3dly. We may know our Election by our Faith in Christ. As no Work will please God, unless done in Faith, *Hebrews xi. 6.* so no more will Work prove our Election, if not done in Faith. As Works prove Faith to be true, so Faith makes our Works to be good. To trust to Works without Faith in Christ, is to trust to ourselves: But when Works are done in Faith, then they are good; so far as agreeable to God's Word: And where this Faith is that thus accompanies good Works, it is a good Proof of our Election. Hence called *the Faith of God's Elect, Tit. i. 1.* So *1 Thes. iii. 4.* *Remembring without ceasing your Work of Faith, &c. ver. 4. knowing, Brethren, beloved of the Lord, your Election of God:* And this they know by that Work of Faith. Well then, Hast thou that readest found this Faith wrought in thee, whereby thou hast closed with Christ as held forth in the Gospel? Hast thou given up thyself to him, depending only on him as thy Righteousness and Strength? Art thou giving the Glory only to him? If thy Heart deceive thee not herein, trouble not thyself any more with perplexing Thoughts of thy Election; for if but Five were chosen out of the whole World, thou art One of them: Forasmuch as true Faith was never wrought in any other. As Christ undertook to purchase Faith for all, and work Faith in all that the Father gave him, so 'tis impossible that any of those should come short of it, and as impossible that any but those should obtain it.

But what if upon Search the Soul can't find these Scripture Evidences; and is not only doubtful concerning them, but certain it hath them not; that he is neither effectually called, nor sanctified, &c. must he conclude he is not elected? No, by no Means: For tho' the Being of these

these are a sure Proof that such are elected, yet the Want of them is no Proof that they are not so. Indeed to die without these, is a full Proof of their being not elected; for that would have prevented so sad an End. Tho' the Soul hath not yet found these Things wrought, 'tis possible for ought we know it may do; the Time for God to discover this Love, in these Effects of it, may not be yet. Some that are now called and sanctified, seem'd once as unlikely so to be as any that now are not so, are, or can be. God suffers some of his Elect to live a long Time in Sin, till there seems no more Hopes of them than there was of *Lazarus* rising from the Dead; when his Sister said, *Lord, by this Time he stinketh*: And yet at last quickens them. *Saul*, when a Blasphemer and a Persecutor, seem'd as unlike to be one of the Elect as any could be; and yet says God, *Acts ix. 15. He is a chosen Vessel unto me*: So that tho' we cannot say of any un sanctified Person that he is elected, yet we cannot say he is not. Suppose therefore that upon Search a Soul cannot find in Time past a Work of Grace wrought in him; yet if from this present Time that Soul will but submit to the Calls of Christ, and sincerely embrace and obey him, let not that Soul doubt of his being elected: His hearty Willingness to close with Christ for the Time to come is a surer Evidence of his being elected, than all his former Neglect or Contempt of him is that he is not. 'Tis greater Presumption for the Least of Sinners to say he is elected, than for the Greatest of Sinners to say he may be so. Nor doth any Thing I have said tend to Presumption, since all that such can say is, that for ought they or any other can say to the contrary, they may, as to this or that particular Person, be elected: And when they actually believe in Christ, it will be no Presumption to believe they are so. But as no Wiseman will content himself with a mere Possibility in Matters of such infinite Moment and Concern, and since nothing short of true Faith in Christ, and Love to Christ, can put this Matter out of Doubt; it behoves each Soul to give up himself to Christ. Non-Election never was a Hinderance to the Salvation of any Soul that sincerely embraced Christ. We may as well believe that an elect Soul may perish for

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Want of Faith, as that a Soul that truly believes may perish for not being elected. As Election never brought a Soul to Heaven, without the Intervention of the Means appointed in Order thereunto; so Non-Election never was a Cause of sending any to Hell in whom such Means were wrought; the End and the Means being finally inseparable. For tho' the Decree to that End may be long before the Execution of the Means appointed, and these Means may be executed long before the End decreed is obtain'd and enjoy'd, yet 'tis impossible, according to the Method of God's Grace, that the End should be finally separated from the Means, or the Means from the End.

6th Inference. What Glory is due to God the Father on this Account! There is a Glory due in common to each Person in the Sacred Trinity, since there is such a sweet Harmony in those Three agreeing as One concerning our Salvation. And there is a Glory due to each Person particularly herein. 1. To the Spirit of God, since it is he that fits us for Heaven by Renovation and Regeneration. 2. To the Son, for undertaking the Work of Redemption; and had not he died to purchase Grace for us, the Spirit had never wrought this in us. The Blood of Christ is as truly the meritorious Cause of our Grace, as the Spirit is the efficient to work it; nor doth the Spirit sanctifie one Soul more than Christ redeem'd; the Blood and the Water are of equal Extent. 3. There is a primary Glory due to God the Father for electing, since the Son had not died to redeem any, nor had the Spirit sanctified any, if the Father had not elected them: Christ's dying for no more than them, the Spirit's sanctifying no more than them, clearly proves what would have been the End of them if not elected. Election is as much attributed to the Father, as Redemption is to the Son, or Sanctification to the Spirit. 1 *Pet.* i. 2. *Eph.* i. 4. Christ himself as Mediator is call'd *God's Elect*, *Isa.* xlii. 1. as he was the Means appointed by God to bring about his gracious Ends. The Father committed his Elect to the Care of Christ, who was to see them all forthcoming at the Great Day. Nor did he die for one more, *John* x. 11. *The good Shepherd giveth his Life for the Sheep*; nor would he pray for one more,

John xvii. 9. I pray for them, I pray not for the World, &c. He knew it was in vain, and was not willing to spend his Breath in vain to pray for others, or his Blood in vain to die for others.

7th Inference. How careful should such be as not only believe this to be a Truth, but have good Hope thro' Grace of an Interest in it, and Salvation by it, so to walk as not to bring any Reproach to it. How sad would it be if any that love this Doctrine, and plead for it, should expose both themselves and it to the Scorn of the World; and so dishonour that Doctrine more by their Lives, than they ever honour'd it by their Words: Or make the World say as the Poet, *Quid Verba audiam, cum Facta videam?* You can't but see what a Prejudice Men have against this Doctrine; and tho' I am apt to think many of these are not over-much righteous themselves, yet they can sooner see a Mote in the Eye of another, than a Beam in their own. These load this Truth with Reproaches. Say they, They that know they are elected, may live as they please. Oh! Let our holy Walk give them and *Satan* the Lie. But stay, Why do I call this a Lie, which in a Sense is True, that such do live as they please; that is to say, a holy Life? Nothing pleases such more, they desire to live no other Life: But we know what they mean hereby. Oh! How sad would it be if the Righteousness of God should suffer thro' our Unrighteousness. If we believe that God has done more for us than others, let us do more for him: If happier, let us be holier. If God has separated us from the World, let us separate ourselves from them; and not partake of their Sins, seeing we shall not partake of their Plagues. God is said to chuse us that we should be holy; not only to shew the Necessity of it, but also to shew what a Motive it should be to it. I'll close this Head with *1 Pet. ii. 9, 11, 12. But ye are a Chosen Generation, a Royal Priesthood, an Holy Nation, &c.* ver. 11, 12. *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain from fleshly Lusts, having your Conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil Doers, they may by your good Works which they shall behold glorify God.* See how he makes

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makes their being chosen the Motive to that holy Conversation.

8th Inference. What Cause have such to admire the free Grace of God, that can see themselves interested herein; and say, *What me, Lord?* Several Considerations should raise our Admiration!

1st, To think that God should chuse us so early. God resolved to be before-hand with us; that we might not think he saw any Thing in us moving him thereunto, he took the first Opportunity to express his Love. Oh, amazing! That God should lay such a sure Foundation for the Happiness of Men, yea of Rebels, before he had laid the Foundation of the World: And that before they had a Being, infinite Love should be at work for our Well-being. That *Jacob* should be loved before born. 'Tis said, *Prov. viii. 23. 31. I was set up from Everlasting, from the Beginning, or ever the Earth was:* Now how, or to what End was Christ thus early set up; but as a Mediator, to undertake for the Elect in those eternal Transactions? And 'tis said, *ver. 30. I was daily his Delight;* to shew it was not Want of Love in the Father that made him appoint Christ to that Work, but his dear Love to us: *Ver. 31. Rejoicing in the habitable Parts of the Earth, and my Delights were with the Sons of Men:* Oh! How he long'd 'till the Fullness of Time was come, to discover his Love. It was wonderful Grace in God not to drive out our First Parents from Paradiſe, till that early Promise was made of the Seed of the Woman as the Way of Recovery: How much more to chuse any of us much earlier; since, had it not been for this early Choice, that early Promise had never been made. May not we say, as *Job xvii. 17. What is Man that thou shouldest magnifie him, and that thou shouldest set thine Heart upon him?* His setting his Heart upon us, notes the Greatness of his Love, and this magnifies us. But, oh! what could God see in Man, poor miserable Man, thus to love him; and to move him to set him apart for Himself, that might have been set apart for Destruction. This great, this early Love calls for Admiration.

2^{dly}. 'Tis Cause of Admiration, if we consider what a very small Number such were chosen in. If a Hundred Persons were condemn'd for the same Crime, and the King should freely pardon one of them, and leave the others to die, would not that Person admire the Kindness of the King? I dare not pretend to tell the Difference, as to the Number of such as are chosen, and such as are not, but we have Reason from Scripture to think it is very great; and for ought I know, much greater than I named. It is but a little Flock to whom it is the Father's good Pleasure to give the Kingdom. Hence 'tis said, *Rom. ix. 27. Tho' the Number of the Children of Israel be as the Sand of the Sea, a Remnant shall be saved.* Mind, he doth not say tho' the Number of the World is so, but of the Children of *Israel*, such as made a Profession; and but a Remnant out of those shall be saved: To shew that as a Remnant is to the whole Piece, so is the Number of the saved: The Elect are but here and there one. Many are called, but few of them chosen. And should not this raise the Admiration of them that are so? When Christ promised to them that kept his Commands in Love, that he would manifest himself to them, that Disciple breaks out into a holy Admiration, *John, xiv. 22. Lord, how is it that thou shouldest manifest thy self unto us, and not unto the World?* So may such say, Lord how is it that thou shouldest chuse us and not others? What but one out of many, and thou he! How came this to pass? Do you think *Lot* did not admire distinguishing Love, that he, when there were not Ten more Righteous in *Sodom*, should be saved as a Brand out of the Fire, while he saw so many of his Friends and Acquaintance consumed in the Flames? Did not *Noah* admire his Deliverance by the Ark, that he and a few more should be saved, and all the World beside drowned? But these all come short of what the Elect shall enjoy; theirs being a Spiritual, the other but a Corporal Deliverance.

3^{dly}. It is Cause of Admiration to such, if we consider that God has pass'd by many more noble by Birth, and better by Practice, who might have done more for God than such as he has chosen. To see Kings pass'd by, and such

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such chosen as sat upon the Dunghill: To see *Lazarus* chosen that lay begging at the Door, and *Dives* left with all his Riches! O Admiration, that God should make such the Objects of his Choice, as the World look upon to be the Filth and Off-scouring of it. *James*, ii. 5. *Harken, my beloved Brethren*: As if he had said, I have some strange Thing to tell you. *Hath not God chosen the Poor of this World rich in Faith?* What could God see in, or expect from such as these? See a like Text, *1 Cor.* i. 27, 28. *But God hath chosen the foolish Things of the World, to confound the Wise; and God hath chosen the weak Things of the World, to confound the Mighty. And base Things of the World, and Things that are despised, hath God chosen, and Things which are not, to bring to nought Things that are.* As God chose a little *David* from following the Sheep, before all the proper Sons of *Jesse*, who was brought last to *Samuel* as the most unlikeliest of them all; yet says the Lord, *Anoint him, for this is he*, *1 Sam.* xvi. 12. So how strange and amazing is it, that if God would chuse any, that he should not chuse such as might do most for him. And especially if we consider that he chose such as he foresaw would rebel against him; and that the foreseen Sin could not prevent him chusing. He knew what Deceit *Jacob* would use to get the Blessing, and yet chose him. Tho' he had chose him before he had done Evil, yet not before he knew the Evil he would do. He knew what Havock *Saul* would make of his Church; how many of his dear Saints he would hale to Prison; and yet chose him. Thus when he foresaw his Elect weltering in their Blood, he resolved in his own Breast that they should live. Thus we see Man was not only unworthy of God's Love, but that he was worthy to be abhorr'd by him; not only unworthy of so great a Blessing, but worthy to be cursed; and that God should rather have set him apart for Destruction, than for Salvation; shall not these admire that can see their Interest in it?

4thly. 'Tis Cause of Admiration to think what Happiness such are chosen to. Such not only are prevented from sinking into the Depth of Misery, but are advanced to the highest Felicity. As *David* was chosen from following

lowing the Sheep, to be King over Israel. *James ii. 5. Hath not God chosen the poor of this World rich in Faith, and Heirs of a Kingdom? So 1 Pet. i. 2, 4. Elect, &c, v. 4. To an Inheritance undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you.* Ah, what is all the World, and the Glory of it, if compar'd to this heavenly Inheritance? When the Apostle has told the Saints what Cause there was to give Thanks to God for chusing them; he not only tells them they were chosen to Salvation, but adds, *Whereunto he called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ;* hence said to be *Heirs, yea, Joint-Heirs with Christ.* Compare *2 Thes. ii. 13, 14,* and *Rom. viii. 17.* 'Tis true, in all Things Christ will have the Preheminence, and 'tis but Reason he should, being *the Head over all Things to the Church;* but as his Elect make up his mystical Body, so he will not only have them with him to behold his Glory, but to be glorified together, *Rom. viii. 17.* And all this Felicity flows down from electing Love. We can take in but little of Heaven; but be it what it will, it comes this Way; 'tis such as he foreknew that he glorifies. His Calling us, and Saving us, equally flow from his eternal Purpose, *2 Tim. i. 9.* So *Matt. xxv. 34. Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.* Is not this to be admired?

5thly. 'Tis Cause of Admiration to think how such were chosen, namely in Christ, *Eph. i. 4. According as he hath chosen us in him.* As this was the Means God fixed on for our obtaining the End, so the Means are no less to be admired than the End.

Nay, to me it seems a greater Wonder of Grace, that God should bring any to Heaven by Christ, than if he had brought them to Heaven without any Regard to what Christ did and suffered to that End. For tho' nothing out of himself caused God to elect any, no, not the Satisfaction made by Christ, it being a mere Act of the good Pleasure of his Will; yet according to divine Appointment, the Intervention of some Things were necessary, in Order to our obtaining the Happiness decreed for us, and of the Satisfaction made by Christ, as the

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the procuring Cause of the Happiness decreed, tho' not of the Decree itself. When God in his infinite Love had resolved to save some out of the perishing World; for the further Display thereof, he resolved to effect his Purposes in and thro' Christ. Let us therefore suppose God to speak thus to his Son: O my Son, I do foresee the Men that we shall make will sin, and thereby expose themselves to eternal Misery: But in Compassion to them, I do resolve to save some; and I'll do it this Way: I do make over to thee my chosen ones; I constitute thee as Mediator to make Peace between me and them; I do expect full Satisfaction to my Justice from thee for all their Offences. To this End thou must vail thy Glory, by going down into the World and assuming their Nature, that thou mayst be made like unto thy Brethren: Thou must be a Man of Sorrow, to bring them to Joy: Thou must be despised, that they may be honoured: Thou must be made under the Law, and undergo the Punishment due to them: Thou must die a painful, shameful, ignominious Death, that they may partake of eternal Life. O amazing Grace! That God should thus substitute his Son, his only Son, his dear Son in our Room, and demand Payment of him for Debts that we contracted! That he should wound him, that he might heal us; forsake him, that he might embrace us; and to deal thus with him, that never offended him, to save Rebels. Well may it be call'd Election of Grace. Sure Eternity itself will be little enough to admire this. Sure such as condemn this Doctrine know but little of it, either as to their Interest in it, or the true Nature of it. Shall our Eye be evil, because God is good? Did ever any Subject fly in the Face of his Prince for preferring him? What tho' some are not sure they are interested therein, yet since some are, and they do not know they are not, they ought to admire it. Suppose that after all the Cavils of some against Election they should be found of that Number, how would they be ashamed of their former Contempt? What, shall the same Truth that fills so many with Admiration, fill others with Indignation? Shall that Doctrine wherein the Grace of
God

God so clearly shines forth give Offence, when nothing but Grace can save?

9th Inference. How safe and secure must such be as are thus chosen; Nothing can deprive them of Heaven, whom God has decreed to Heaven: They that are the Objects of God's special Love, will be the Darlings of his special Providence. If what we hold by Decree of Chancery is so sure, much more what is decreed by the unchangeable God. Hence, when the Apostle stiles them *Elect*, 1 Pet. i. 2. he adds, *ver. 5. who are kept by the Power of God, &c.* to shew, that if all the Power of Almighty God can defend and keep them, they are safe. So *Isa. xli. 9, 10, — I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away; fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismay'd, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the Right-Hand of my Righteousness.* And all this comes you see from Election. But to speak more particular to this comfortable Point of Doctrine,

1st, The Elect are safe and out of Danger of Hell before call'd. If Election will not secure from Hell, it is of little Worth, and a Doctrine not worth contending for. Tho' the Elect do deserve Hell, *being by Nature Children of Wrath, even as others,* yet 'tis not consistent with electing Love to suffer any of them to come into that Place of Torment. What is Election, but a chusing to Salvation; and how can that be, if such may come short of it? If such may fall into Hell, God's Decrees must be broken. The great Reason why 'tis not possible to deceive the Elect by damnable Doctrines is, because 'tis not possible they should be damn'd. These are secured from Hell, not only by Election, but also by the Satisfaction made by Christ for them; to which all the Good we can do makes no Addition, nor the Evil we do, make the least Detraction. An Elect Person seems under an equal Impossibility of going to Heaven or Hell before call'd: To Heaven he cannot go, for Want of what God has decreed as necessary in order thereunto; and to Hell he cannot go, for the Reason I mention'd.

Quest. But what if an elect Person should die before called and converted?

Ans.

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Ans. It cannot be, the Means being decreed as firmly as the End. O the wonderful Deliverances God often works for his Elect, in saving their Lives when exposed to the most eminent Danger of Death when unconverted! And tho' they could not then see from whence the Deliverance came, but it may be attributed it to Chance, or blind Fortune, or at best to the Skill of Physicians; yet afterwards have been made to see it was owing to electing Love, that kindly slept in between them and the Grave, the Time of Love being not yet come. Our Lord tells us, *John x. 35. The Scripture cannot be broken:* How must that be understood, do not we daily see the Commands therein violated? Yes, but they cannot break God's Decrees, revealed therein, of Rewards and Punishments. It was revealed to good *Simeon*, that he should not see Death till he had seen Christ; so, tho' it is not revealed to any of us in particular, yet 'tis revealed of the Elect in general, that not one of them shall perish by any Means, or in any State: as *John x. 28, 29. My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them; and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal Life, and they shall never perish:* Which must extend to their unconverted State. 'Tis said of the *Jews*, to whom he spake, *ver. 31. Then the Jews took up Stones again to stone him, But what had he done?* You see the World don't love this Doctrine, tho' they don't love to perish; yet they seem to chuse it, rather than have it prevented by the Sovereign Grace of God. But is there no Difference as to the State of the Elect before call'd, and after? Yes, as seems clear from *Eph. ii. 12, 13. That at that Time ye were without Christ, &c. but now in Christ Jesus, ye who were some Time afar off, are made nigh by the Blood of Christ.* But as to their Security from Hell, I know none; except as to our Sense of it, and Comfort in it. I cannot see but a Saint in Heaven may as well be turn'd out, as an elect Person for any Reason finally kept out. But some Cavillers may say this is a dreadful Doctrine, then Men may be as wicked as they will, and yet be safe. I confess I cannot tell how this Doctrine thro' the Subtilty of *Satan* and Wickedness of Mens Hearts may be abused; but if no Doctrine must be preached

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that may be abused, we must conceal the most glorious Truths of the Gospel. The Apostle tells us of some that turned the Grace of God into Lasciviousness, *Jude iv.* What then, must we not preach it? Yes, better those perish as the just Reward of their Sin, than others perish for Want of it who have so dear a Love for it. By this Rule, because Christ is said to be a Stone of stumbling, and to be set for the Fall of many, therefore better he had never come, or it is not our Duty to preach him now he is come. What tho' the preaching of his Cross it *to them that perish Foolishness*, yet we must preach it, seeing to such as are saved it is *the Power of God*. Nor can I see why this should be called a dreadful Doctrine: The contrary Doctrine seems more dreadful, to suppose the Sin of Man either not foreseen, or able to frustrate the Decrees of God. I would fain know where is the Danger to Man, or Dishonour to God, to say, that God will effect his Purposes, however vile and wicked Men may be, by delivering them from Sin, and working Repentance in them for it. Could we as Instruments in God's Hand convert any, the viler they were, the more Glory would redound to God thereby. If this Truth is not maintain'd, that the Elect can't perish in any State, the whole Doctrine of Election must fall: For if the Decrees of God depend on the good Behaviour of Men for their Accomplishment, 'tis easie to see what the End thereof will be.

2d, As those are safe from Danger of Hell before call'd; so also from Danger of final Apostacy thro' the Subtlety of *Satan*, or Fury of his Instruments, when call'd. Men may rage at this Truth, but all their Rage shall neither overthrow it, nor the Faith of such as have seen their Interest in it, with all their Craft whereby they lie in Wait to deceive. Our Lord tells us there shall be false Prophets, that would *deceive, if possible, even the Elect*; noting, it was impossible so to do. If Men rise up against them, God will appear for them, and give kind Answers to them. *Luke xviii. 7. And shall not God avenge his own Elect which cry Day and Night unto him? I tell you he will avenge them speedily.* Nor shall *Satan* ever be able finally to overcome such. Tho' God

for wise Ends may suffer *Satan* to disturb them, and to tempt them to Sin, and overcome them by some Temptation, as *Peter*, yet those bewailed Infirmities shall not be their Ruin; *Esek.* xviii. 30. He may take them in his Snare, but he shall not always hold them in it. As the Foreknowledge of these Infirmities could not prevent God from chusing them; so their actual falling into them shall not make him change his Mind, or remove his Love from them. Tho' others may perish for such Sins, yet these shall not. The Apostle lets us know how 'tis our Duty to shun all Sin, yet in the same Verse tells us the Foundation stood sure, which was God's Knowledge of them that were his, *2 Tim.* ii. 19. to shew that tho' *Satan* by his Instruments had overthrown the Faith of others, as *ver.* 17, 18. yet he should never destroy those that stood on this Foundation. So *Ram.* viii. 33. *Who shall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect?* i. e. To his Called Ones, *ver.* 30. Why, do not the World and the Devil lay Things to their Charge? But they had as good say Nothing, this will baffle all their Accusations, that they were elected, and called. As our Election secures our Justification, so our Justification secures our Salvation, in the Order God has appointed, and revealed in his Word. The Blessings designed for the Elect were treasured up in Christ, and so given down to them in such a Time and Way as was designed for them. As a Father dies, and gives so much to his Child, to be lodged in the Hands of some faithful Trustee, that the Use of it may be given to him during his Minority, to prevent him falling into Poverty, and the whole Stock to be put into his Hand when at Age: The same Will that gave him that Right to it, now puts it into his Possession. Thus God chose Christ as our Repository, and lodged all our Happiness in his Hand, to be given to us at that Time and Way as expressed in his Word. Now this Happiness being first decreed for us, and given to us, and secured in that everlasting Covenant made with us, all is safe and secure to us; our bewail'd Infirmities shall not deprive us of what God has thus decreed for us, and given to us. *Satan* thought he had a good Plea against *Joshua*, because not wholly free from Sin;

but he being chosen, the Devil was severely rebuked, his Mouth was stopped, his Indictment removed, and he nonsuited. Tho' Sin in the Saints is Cause of deep Humiliation, yet it ought not to hinder our rejoicing in what God hath done for us. Yea, to speak freely, to me it seems a great Truth, that a Saint has never more Cause to rejoice in Christ than when he feels those Stirrings of Corruption: For as a Mariner never so much prizes a Boat as when the Ship he is in is sinking under him, seeing he must sink without it, so we never have more Cause to rejoice in Christ than when we see our Need of him, and Misery without him. Nor do I know any Way so effectual to recover a Saint from his Falls, to humble him truly for them, and to strengthen him against Sin for the Time to come, as to act Faith on the Father as electing, and on Christ as dying, and thereby making Satisfaction to Divine Justice for those Sins. Let us put the Case thus: What must a Saint do that has had a comfortable Sense of God's Love to him, and Grace in him, when he finds Sin easily besetting him? Must he give up all his Hope, and resolve to refuse to be comforted? Or must he with *Paul*, when buffeted by *Satan*, and pain'd by that Thorn in the Flesh, take Comfort in the Grace of God? Sure the latter favours most of a Gospel Spirit. When the Apostle had exhorted to lay aside the Sin that did most easily beset them, he directs them, and us with them, what was needful hereunto; and that is, to look unto Jesus, *Heb. xii. 1, 2.* not only to look to him as the Author but as the Object of our Faith, as one that endured the Cross.

10th Inference. What Cause is here of Thankfulness to God, from such as have any good Evidence of an Interest in this electing Love of God? The greater the Privilege is such enjoy, the higher should their Thanksgivings rise. He shews himself unworthy, and unlikely to be interested in it, that is not thankful to God for it. Sure I am, the Ages, after the World shall have an End, are little eno' to spend in expressing our Thanks for what God did for such, and his good Will to such, before the World began. O how do the Heavens eccho with the Songs of Saints about the Throne, that electing Love brought

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brought them thither! And the more we are taken up in this Work, the fitter we are for Heaven. *2 Thes. ii. 13. But we are bound to give Thanks always to God for you, Brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation.* It was their Duty so to do, and that always; and if for others, much more for themselves: And the Reason is, because God had from the Beginning chosen them. God began to chuse, not they; he made the Beginning. Or understand it as *John i. 1.*

11th Inference. Hath God thus chosen some, how should we chuse God? If he hath chosen any of us for his People, let us chuse him for our God: Our chusing God in Time, will be a sure Evidence that he chose us before Time. *1 John iv. 19. We love him, because he first loved us.* Tho' we can see no Reason why God should chuse us, there is much Reason why we should chuse God. He had been blessed in the Enjoyment of himself, if not one Soul had been elected; but we can't be blessed or happy in this World, or That which is to come, if we do not chuse him. O let us then with one Consent say, as *Josb. xxiv. 15. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, chuse you this Day whom ye will serve; — but as for me, and my House, we will serve the Lord:* And let us not only chuse God, but let us endeavour therein to resemble his chusing us!

1st, God chose his Elect early, from the Beginning, yea before the Beginning of the World; he let no Time slip, yea he chose before Time. Now tho' we can't chuse God so early, yet let us chuse him in the Morning of our Time. The Morning was the Time when the Master of the Vinyard went to hire Labourers. It pleases God to see us set out early for Heaven. Our Journey may be long, our Work is great, we had need set out early. Let us act as they that make God their Choice, and not their Refuge only. Many put God off till the Evening of their Day, as if any Time was soon enough, and long eno' for him; God did not do so by us. Oh, how unworthy are they of an Interest in him, that esteem any Thing before him. *Eccles. xii. 1. Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth, &c.* Now, while God

is calling; now, while the Door of Mercy is open. Oh! 'tis dangerous to live one Day without God in the World. Now is the accepted Time. As God is the chiefest Good, so let him have the Flower of our Time, and of all we have, and not be put off with a few dying Groans, or with the Fagg-End of our Life. And if any have lost the Morning of their Time; oh! let 'em lose no more: And tho' the Devil hath had thy Youth, let him not have all thy Time, lest he hath thee too. O come into God's Vinyard, tho' at the 9th or 11th Hour; better late, then never. O endeavour to redeem the Time lost, by giving the greater Diligence in the Service of God for the Time to come. But some may say, I fear my Day of Grace is over, I have refused many a sweet Call, have withstood and stifled many a Check of Conscience, have liv'd till gray Hairs are upon me; I fear, if I should return, I shall be like the foolish Virgins that came when the Door was shut, and have such an Answer as they, *Matt. xxv. 11, 12.* How may I know if it is not too late? To this I answer, 'Tis never too late to such as are sincerely willing to give up themselves to God: Thy giving up thyself to be the Lord's, will infallibly prove 'tis not too late. Only take Heed thy Heart deceive thee not; and lest thou takest a Desire of Mercy, instead of a Desire of God; and desirest only to be saved by him, and not to be a Servant to him; and to get to Heaven, but not to be fitted for Heaven. Like *Balaam*, who desired to die the Death of the Righteous, but cared not for his Life. If thy Heart deceive thee not in this Matter, thou hast no Reason to fear thy Day being over. God never refused a Soul that sincerely came to him as required in his Word. Christ hath promised, *John vi. 37.* *And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out;* and says God, *Isa. xlii. 23.* *who will hearken and hear for the Time to come:* God is willing to pass by all former Slights, if but for the Time to come thou art willing to be his.

2^d, God chose his Elect freely, as none could compel him, so neither did he chuse them for any Thing he expected from them; but pure Love to their Persons moved him to chuse them. So let us chuse God, not only for

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for fear of Hell, but for himself: What is in God should more endear him to us, than all the Blessings he bestows upon us. And as in chusing any of us, he prefers us above the World; so let us esteem God above all, and say, as *Psal. lxxiii. 25. Whom have I in Heaven but thee? And there is none upon the Earth that I desire besides thee.* In chusing God for our God, we may have an Eye to the Blessings he bestows; but yet those immense Perfections that concenter in him, should chiefly attract our Affections to him. To love God for what he bestows upon us, is rather Love to ourselves than to him, and no Ways resembles his Love to us: For tho' he loves what is done by us, if done spiritually, yet he doth not love for what is done by us.

3d, God chose his Elect with a Resolve never to cast them away, as *Isa. xli 7. I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away:* He chose so as no Afflictions, Poverty, or Temptations, should make him change his Mind. So let us chuse God, and say as he, *Luke xxii. 23. Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into Prison and to Death:* Let us say, God shall be our God for ever and ever.

12th Inference. Hence we may see the Cause why the Labours of some of God's faithful Ministers are so unsuccessful in some Places, and no more Souls converted thereby. As the best and most able Preachers shall never be a Means of converting such as God hath not elected; so, if Instruments are weak, yea, or worse than weak, they shall not prevent such being called as God has chosen. For tho' I conceive 'tis seldom, if ever, that God makes Use of wicked Men to this End; yet if he has any of his Elect in any Place, he will send such Instruments as he will bless, or work without them: And I doubt not but there are special Providences calling his Ministers occasionally into Places to this End. As is said of Christ, *John iv. 4. And he must needs go thro' Samaria:* Why, was there no other Way to Galilee? Yes, but there was an elect Woman there to be brought Home, and there lay the Necessity. A Minister is never out of his Way, so long as he is in his Master's Work. But where God's Elect lie thin, there Conversion-Work will go on slowly.

slowly. In some Places God has much People, and there 'tis no Wonder to see Souls flocking to Christ; but if God has no People elected there, no Wonder if Ministers, tho' ever so Evangelical, are made to cry, *Who hath believed our Report?* For tho' the Number of such as are elected exceeds for a Time the Number that are converted, the Time of Love in calling them being not yet come; yet the Number of the Converted never exceeds the Number of the Elect: For tho' more may be outwardly call'd, yet no more will be effectually brought to Christ, let the Means be what they will. Christ will manifest himself to the Men his Father hath given to him out of the World, *John xvii. 8. For I have given them the Words that thou gavest me, and they have received them.* The Consideration of this should quiet such as are faithful, but have little Success, lest by our Discontent we reflect on God's Sovereignty. Says God, *Isa. lv. 11. My Word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and shall prosper in the Thing whereto I sent it.* And if we do but the Work that God sent us to do, be it more, or be it less, 'tis eno'. Faithful Ministers have many Things to encourage them in their Work, tho' they see but little Success. As 1. That it is their earnest Desire; if it was the Will of God, that more Souls may be converted; which Desire, accompany'd with suitable Endeavour, God will accept of as if it was so. *Isa. xlix. 3, 4. Thou art my Servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Then, I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my Strength for nought; yet, sure my Judgment is with the Lord, and my Work with my God.* He owns Israel to be his Servant, in whom he would be glorified, even when he had laboured in vain. God may be glorified, tho' Souls are not converted. He adds, Yet surely my Judgment is with the Lord, &c. God will reward his Servants according to their Work, and not always according to their Success; the latter depending wholly on himself. God may be glorified in the Destruction, as well as in the Salvation of Sinners. That is a remarkable Text to this Purpose, to shew how well pleased God is in the Labours of his faithful Servants, whatever their Success may

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may be. 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. *For we are unto God a sweet Savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one we are the Savour of Death unto Death, and to another the Savour of Life unto Life: And who is sufficient for these Things?* He doth not say that the Sinners that perish are a sweet Savour unto God, but we are, who preach to them. God is pleased with the faithful Labours of his Servants, tho' they that hear them perish; yea, tho' it is a Death unto Death, and a double Destruction that befalls them by sinning against such clear Calls: Yet we are a Savour to God even in these. And adds, *And who is sufficient for these Things?* As if he had said, had it been in the Power of Ministers to convert them, and they had not been converted, they would have been no Savour unto God in them that perish, but a Stink in his Nostrils; but while we see such different Effects of the preaching of the same Word, that one is advanced to the highest Happiness, obtains Life unto Life; that others are thereby exposed to the greatest Misery, it shews on whom all depended: And therefore he don't think the worse of his Servants, tho' Souls may perish under their Care. As the Servant that sows his Seed is not blamed (if it was good Seed) tho' it never comes up, but has his Reward as much as if it yielded the most plentiful Harvest. And the Physician has his Pay, tho' the Patient die, seeing it was not in his Power to save his Life. *Isa. xlix. 5. — Tho' Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the Eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my Strength:* His Strength to support him under those Discouragements. 2. It may encourage such, if any Souls be converted, tho' but a Few. Christ thought a Soul worth dying for, and shall we think our Labours more worth than he thought his Blood? It causes Joy in Heaven to see one Soul converted, *Luke xv. 7.* And shall we mourn while Angels rejoice? We may do more Good than we know of; however, it should satisfy us we shall do what our Sovereign God would have us do. 3. It may encourage such to think they don't know what God may do by them for the future. When that certain Time comes of the Waters being troubled, Who knows how many im-

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potent Folk may be healed? We read of 3000 converted at one Sermon. Look as it was with that Disciple that had toiled all Night and had taken Nothing, yet at the Command of his Lord once more let down his Net, and inclosed a great Multitude of Fishes, *Luke v. 4, 5, 6.* So ought we to go on in our Master's Work, and leave the Success to him that openeth, and no Man shutteth; and shutteth, and no Man openeth: With confident Persuasion that the Election shall obtain, tho' all the rest are blinded.

Thus have I finished the First Part of the Work I proposed, which was to prove the Doctrine of Election from Eternity, and to clear the Righteousness of God therein; and whether I have done it or not, my Reader must judge for himself. But seeing the Text I am upon looks as much to the Rejection of *Esau*, as Election of *Jacob*, and those Two are called Two Nations, as representing God's Methods with all his Elect on the one Hand, and Reprobate on the other Hand, I come to the Second Part, where I am sensible the greatest Difficulty lies; and I suppose it is this that makes Men quarrel at the former. What, for Men to be damn'd! They don't like that; they could be content to be saved by Election, but not to be damn'd as Reprobates: They love Sin, but don't love the Wages due to it, nor yet so much as to hear of it, lest it spoil the Pleasure of their Mind in committing it. I have handled the former Part under the Name of *Election*, so I shall handle this under the Name of *Reprobation*, which is a Scripture-Term as well as the other; *Jer. vi. 30. Reprobate Silver shall Men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.* Such as God rejects, you see ought to be call'd by Men Reprobates. And tho' they may call themselves *Silver*, as overvaluing themselves, and their Doings, yet being rejected of the Lord, they are but reprobate Silver. And tho' the Word may sound harsh in some Ears, by Reason of that Contempt cast on the Doctrine, yet I hope the Offence will be removed, when the Thing comes to be clearly stated.

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I am sensible many have offer'd Violence to the Text, and endeavour'd to force it to look another Way, and as useles to our present Purpose, and not to understand the Instance of *Jacob* being loved, and *Esau* being hated, as having any Regard to the eternal Election of the former, or Rejection of the latter, but only to signify their different Circumstances that Providence (if such will own any) should fix them in here. But suppose they could weaken this Evidence, or was this whole Epistle to the *Romans* torn out of our Bibles, as some have wished, for the Ill-will they bear to the ixth Chapter, yet such a Cloud of Witnesses would rise up from other Parts of Scripture in Defence of the same Truth, as would stop the Mouths of all Gainsayers, and put to Silence the Ignorance of such foolish Men. So that before this Truth can want Evidence, not only that Epistle must be cancelled, but also all the Old and New Testament. To say this only respects their worldly Circumstances, is to militate with the History recorded of them, which gives no Countenance to such a wild Interpretation. We read, *Gen. xxxiii.* when *Jacob* had prepared his Doves to pacifie his angry Brother *Esau*, he refused them; saying, *I have eno', my Brother: And call'd Esau Lord.* Nor can I think any can be so blind, but such as wilfully shut their Eyes, as not to know this to be a Mistake: For what is spoken as to God's Love to the one, or Hatred of the other, was spoken of them as being not yet born, *Rom. ix. 11.* and so could not be understood of earthly Things. Nor can I see so great a Difference therein as some pretend: For *Jacob* order'd his Servants to stile him *my Lord Esau*, *Gen. xxxii. 4.* and when *Jacob* came to present him with his Doves, he himself stiles him *my Lord*, and himself his Servant, *ver. 15.* and bowed himself to the Ground Seven Times. *Chap. xxxiii. 3.* And *Esau* told *Jacob*, *ver. 9. I have eno', my Brother:* Which is more than some of vast Substance in the World will say. Where then is this great Difference in earthly Things? Nor were these single Instances of God's Love and Hatred; for 'tis said, *Genesis xxv. 33. And the Lord said unto her, two Nations*

are in thy Womb, &c. As representing the two Parts of the World; the Elect, and Reprobate.

But to suppose, tho' by no Means to grant, that this Text was to be understood in so low a Sense, yet other Texts will prove a Fore-ordaining of some to Wrath, as well as of others to Salvation: *Isa. xxx. 33. For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the King it is prepared, &c.* Says Calvin, *Per Tophet Gehennam had dubie intelligit*, i. e. by Tophet no Doubt but he means Hell. So *Jude 4. For there are certain Men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this Condemnation.* What can be clearer? Here was the Place of Punishment ordained, and certain Persons ordained to that Place; and both of Old, as old as Eternity. And the Word *Κεῖμα* is used to express the Torments of Hell, or Condemnation of the Devil, *1 Tim. iii. 6.* and the Word *Ordained* is *ἡγογεςπαμμενοι* fore-written or registred. Thus the Elect are said to be ordained to eternal Life, *Acts xiii. 48.* others are said to be ordained to Condemnation, to shew the Certainty of the latter, as well as of the former. Thus *Judas* is call'd the Son of Perdition, in Opposition to the Elect, who are call'd the Men that God had given to Christ out of the World, *John xvii. 6, 12.* The Matter being thus plain, I shall speak of the Non-Elect under this General Head.

Proposition. There were a certain Number of Persons by Name whom God did from Eternity absolutely pass by, leaving them out of the Number of his Elect, and whom he did positively ordain by an immutable Decree to punish with everlasting Destruction, in a Way of Righteousness, as the just Reward of their foreseen Sin and Wickedness, voluntarily to be committed. In handling of which, I shall

I. Take the Proposition into its Parts, and confirm them as I go.

II. Clear the Righteousness of God in Preordaining the Damnation of some, by answering the Objections made against it.

III. Shew how the contrary Opinion much more reflects on God's Righteousness.

IV. Apply it.

Reader,

Reader, I hope thou wilt read the Whole, and well consider before thou judgest; the Law condemns no Man before he is hear'd what he has to say for himself, why Sentence should not pass against him. If I do not confirm what I say by unwrested Scripture, then reject it; if I do, at your eternal Peril be it if you don't receive it. I am sensible we are cast in a Day when the Authority of Scripture is little regarded, any farther than Reason can reach, or than falls in with some Men's Opinions. Thus are Men setting up that Idol of the Light within, tho' by a new Name, and worshipping it; judging of Divine Revelation by purblind Reason. I am sensible, that all that own themselves Christians pretend to walk by Scripture-Rule; the *Papists*, the *Protestants*, *Arminians*, *Soci-nians*, pretend to agree in this; yea, the Devil himself brought Scripture to justify his Wickedness in tempting Christ to throw himself down from the Pinnacle of the Temple, *Matt. iv. 6.* but perverted the Text, by picking out what might seem for him, and omitting what appear'd against him: I fear too many imitate him. *2 Cor. iv. 2. Not handling the Word of God deceitfully;* *2 Cor. ii. 17. For we are not as many which corrupt the Word of God:* So some are said to wrest the Scripture, *2 Pet. iii. 16. i. e.* force it to speak what it would not. But Truth is but one, and cannot serve without Violence to confirm contrary Opinions. So that we that have the Scripture, and pretend to walk thereby, have need to beg the Teachings of the Spirit, that we may understand the Scripture; which is vastly preferable to all Helps merely from Human Learning. To reject any Thing plainly proved from Scripture, because we can't comprehend it, is sinful and dangerous: And yet how common so to do? Many deny the Divinity of Christ, because they can't by Reason understand how there can be THREE in ONE. While we carefully avoid that, let us beware of running into worse Mistakes, for the same Reason. For as I don't think their Notions more contrary to Scripture who deny the Divinity of Christ, than theirs who deny the eternal Decrees of God, as to the Salvation of some, or Damnation of others; so neither do I think the former produces such vile Consequences

ces as the latter doth: For tho' I abhor their new Scheme who deny the Divinity of the Son, yet I cannot but think that denying the eternal Decrees of God doth more reflect on the Honour of the Father, than their denying Christ to be God doth reflect on his Honour. They that deny the latter, do yet acknowledge Christ to be Omniscient, &c. but deny him to be Self-existent, and Independant; but they that deny the former, do deny his Omniscience, and render him uncertain what the End of Men will be till he sees how they will behave themselves, and improve that which they never had: And so render him not only nescient, but ignorant of what was to come: Which is in Effect to deny him to be God, by setting Bounds and Limits to the Knowledge of God. I cannot conceive any Cause why the Doctrine of God's eternal Decrees as to the Salvation of some, or Destruction of others, should give Offence to any, except to such as would gladly live in Sin without Punishment. As for good Men, the Decree of Election secures them; nor will the Decree of Reprobation do them any Harm. 'Tis only willful Sinners, who have been Lovers of Pleasure more than Lovers of God and Holiness, and that continue so to do, that will suffer hereby, who bring upon themselves this Destruction; who will be made one Day to clear God herein, and say as that Thief, *Luke xxiii. 41. And we indeed justly, for we receive the due Reward of our Deeds.* Such have much more Cause to blame themselves for sinning, than to blame God for decreeing to punish them for so doing; since had they not been foreseen to sin freely, God had not decreed to punish any particular Person: For tho' his Decree to punish was antecedent to the Sin, yet his Decree was not the Cause of Sin, but only founded on his certain Foreknowledge of it. There is much of old *Adam's* Spirit after the Fall still in his Offspring till renewed, who, when he had violated the righteous Law of his Creator, which he ought to have kept, and none could compel him to break, yet when God call'd him to Account for what he had done, saying, as *Gen. iii. 11. Hast thou eaten of the Tree whereof I commanded thee thou shouldest not eat?* Instead of bewailing what he had done, and submitting to the Punishment

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nishment due to him, seems vilely to reflect on God, as if he had been the Cause both of his Sin and Misery: By saying as, *ver. 12. The Woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the Tree, and I did eat.* As if he had said, Thou gavest her to be a Snare to me; I had never sinned if it had not been for this unkind Gift: And so lays his Sin unjustly at God's Door. So say some, O these Decrees of God, had it not been for them we had never come to what we must now come! When all the Misery that befalls them in this World, and that which is to come, is wholly owing to themselves. Yea, look as the Woman on whom *Adam* charged his Sin, as the Cause thereof was given him as an Help, and not a Hinderance to his Obedience; so this Decree of God to punish for Sin, should deter Men from it. And if now when Men know there is such a fiery Edict put forth against Sin, they will yet run into it, and delight in it, What would they have done had there been no Resolution in God to punish for Sin? The great End of making any Human Laws to punish for some Crimes, is not to encourage to commit them, but to prevent them; and if any will take Occasion by such Laws to be the more wicked, the Law is not to be blamed, which is just, and good, but he that transgresses that Law is worthy to bear his punishment whatever it be. So if now God has decreed to punish for Sin with everlasting Punishment, and publish'd it in his Word, Men will yet commit those Sins, their Destruction is of themselves, and they are worthy of the severest Lashes from Divine Vengeance, as much as *Adam* was to be turned out of Paradise for giving more Credit to the Devil than to God; and to eat of the forbidden Fruit when God had fenced that Tree with that dreadful Commination, *In the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.*

I come now to divide the Proposition into its several Parts, and shew

1st, That God has passed by a Certain Number by Name.

2^d, That God thus passed them by from Eternity, or before all Time.

3^d, That God thus passed them by absolutely.

4th, That

4th, That God ordained the same Persons to eternal Punishment.

5th, That nothing can change this Decree, or alter God's Mind.

6th, That this Condemnation to Punishment was founded on foreseen Sin.

7th, That this Sin was voluntarily committed, and Man not forced hereby.

8th, That all these are in Righteousness.

I have herein proposed much of the same Method in which I handled the former Branch, and the rather because these Things do so naturally flow from the former. If what I delivered therein is true, these cannot be false, as I hope clearly to demonstrate as I go. It becomes us to search into these deep Things of God with all Humility, and not to lean too much to our own Understanding; but to pray that God would give us spiritual Light into these deep Mysteries: The more humble we are in our Enquiry, the likelier to be taught of God. Says the Apostle, 1 Cor. viii. 2. *If any Man think he knoweth any Thing, he knoweth Nothing yet as he ought to know.* True Knowledge is an humbling Thing. After our greatest Scrutiny into these Things, we shall have Cause to say, as *Eccles. vii. 29. Lo, this only have I found, &c.* As we are to receive Christ as a Prophet, so we are bound to hear him in all Things, and to study to know his whole Mind as revealed in his Word. As he was by in these eternal Transactions, so he is best able to reveal them to us, and instruct us in the Knowledge of what he has revealed. He is called *Wonderful, Counsellor, Isa. ix. 8.* And as it would argue no small Degree of Impudence for an ignorant Mechanick to contradict a Counsellor in some critical Point in Law, so much more for such ignorant Creatures as we are to contradict Christ. If we cannot rest satisfied in what he has revealed, we shall be like that unclean Spirit seeking Rest, but findeth none. It once seem'd a Thing incredible to those blind Seducers that God should raise the Dead; but tho' they would not give Credit to it, the Apostle doth not quit the Subject for fear of offending them, but goes on. So we must not shun to declare all the Counsel of God, since all
Scripture

His own Destruction.

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Scripture is not only true, but profitable, and we ought not to keep back any Thing of that. Therefore the

1st Part of the Proposition is this, God passed by a [certain Number by Name.] Hence, *Jude 4. For there are certain Men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this Condemnation.* These certain Men, were certainly ordained, &c. God's chusing a certain Number to Life and Salvation, supposes a certain Number refused, or else we make God to be ignorant of the Number he would make: As he that takes 10 out of 100 knows as well there are 90 left, as that 10 were taken, if he knows there were 100; so God doth not go by Guess in this Matter. As I have proved the Number of the Elect was certain, so this must be as certain: And not only a certain Number, but of certain Persons by Name; not only under such Qualifications, but of such and such Denominations. As *Jacob* by Name, is said to be loved; so *Esau* by Name, is said to be hated. *Pharaoh* by Name, is said to be raised up for God to shew his Power upon in his Destruction, *Exod. ix. 16.* and applied to the Point in Hand, *Rom. ix. 17.* Thus *Judas* by Name, is called the Son of Perdition, *John xvii. 12.* They are more certainly described by Name, than by any other Characters. The Laws of Men cannot do this, they can only punish such as shall break them; and the Reason is, because Law-Makers cannot see before-hand what Persons will break these Laws; but God was under no such Uncertainties. Thus Christ, as God, not only knew that he should be betray'd; but he knew, and that from the Beginning, who should betray him. I hope this will not now produce the same Effects it did then; for 'tis said, from that Time, many of his Disciples went back, and walked no more with him, *John vi. 44. 46.* But, if it must be so, better Hypocrites go, than the Truth go.

God's Love is free; and as he may set his Love on whom he will, so he may deny it to whom he will. I am sensible the Word *Hate*, as applied to *Esau*, may sound harsh in the Ears of such as understand not the true Nature of the Thing; but when they come to know what it is for God to hate, I hope the Offence will cease. It amounts to no more than what they must own God doth,

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and is Righteous in doing, who now seem most offended. Now look as when God is said to love *Jacob*, we are not to understand it of Love as a Passion in God, as it is in us, but of his Good-will in doing him Good; as we express our Love, by doing Good to such as we love: So also by hating *Esau*, we are not to understand any Passion in God, but that he did not extend the same Kindness to him that he did to *Jacob*. I shall clear this by an Instance in Scripture, *Gen. xxix. 30. And he loved also Rachel more than Leah*; and 'tis said, *ver. 31. and when the Lord saw that Leah was hated*: Mind, what is call'd a Loving less *ver. 30*, is call'd a Hating *ver. 31*. Not that he hated *Leah* absolutely, but as compared to *Rachel*, for whom he had a greater Love. Thus in the Case in hand, God bears a common Good-will to all Men, and shews it by the Goodness he extends to them; as in Life, Health, Food, Riches, &c. But he bears a special Good-will to his Elect, in giving them more valuable Blessings, as Grace here, and Glory hereafter.

Nor is here the least Shew of Unrighteousness in God in this unequal Distribution of his Favours, since his hating *Esau*, and such as he, is no more but a denying what he gave to *Jacob*; or a not putting his Name in the Book of Life, as he did *Jacob's*: He gave him of this World, till he said he had eno'; but he refused to give him Heaven: And sure I am, he had more Cause to be thankful for the former, than angry at the latter; since he had more than he deserved. God hath as Sovereign, a Right to dispose of the Earth, as he hath of Heaven, and makes Use of it too: We see how unequally 'tis divided, one is made a King, another a Beggar, and the Reason you have, *Dan. iv. 27. The most High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, &c.* One is rich as *Dives*, another poor as *Lazarus*, and hath not so much as where to set his Foot, on what is his own. Hence, says God, *Jeremiah xxvii. 5. I have made the Earth, the Man, and the Beast that are upon the Ground, by my great Power, and by my outstretched Arm, and have given it to whom it seem'd meet unto me*; yea, we often see that God gives

His own Destruction.

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gives the greatest Share of this to wicked Men: Yet, who ever charged God as unrighteous herein? Because 'tis his own, to dispose of as he pleases. And hath not God as Sovereign a Power to give Grace and Glory? Yes surely. I have shewn in the former Part what Power God has to give Grace to whom he will, I am now to shew he hath the same Power to exclude whom he will. 'Tis said, *Rom. ix. 18. Whom he will he hardens,* i. e. by denying that Grace by which alone he could be soften'd: And this was to whom he would. If Kings, as I shew'd, have Power to pardon one, and leave another to die for the same Crime, How unreasonable to deny that Power to the Great Monarch of the World, that is accountable to none, which was granted to such as are accountable to him. If Fathers can disinherit their own Children when extravagant, and be Blameless; sure God has Power to exclude Rebels from Heaven, and yet be Righteous. If God is thought unrighteous herein, who is accountable to none; sure Man must be much more so, in not giving to some as he doth to others. Is it meet for a Creature to say to God, Thou shalt shew Mercy to all, or to none at all? What is this but assuming a Power of disposing of what belongs to God only.

2d Part of the Proposition, I say a certain Number [from Eternity], and not in Time only. If some were chosen from Eternity, then the rest must be passed by from Eternity. And indeed, Election, as it proves some chosen, so it implies some not chosen, or passed by; for we cannot conceive of a Medium between Elect or Non-elect: We were elected, or not elected. *Esau* was as truly rejected before he was born, as *Jacob* was then elected. Should God purpose a Thing in Time, which he did not purpose before Time, it would argue a Change in God, who changes not: For though God may work a Thing at one Time, that he did not at another, the Change is in the Work done, and not in him that did it: But for God to will a Thing in Time, that he did not will before Time, must imply a Change in God, since God's Will is himself. God may will many Changes, and not change his Will; but if his Will changes, he must change. Nor can I conceive why God should will

the Destruction of any in Time, and be thought righteous therein, rather than to do it before Time, unless Things to be done in Time, that might cause that Will, were fortuitous, or uncertain to God. But I am now considering of God not so properly as ordaining to Punishment, as of his passing by, and resolving not to give Grace. God did not defer this Act of Preterition till he saw Mens Works done, not only because he knew before Time as well as in Time what Men would do, but especially because there was Nothing to be in Time that was the Cause of that Act. As he that refuses to shew Kindness to another, or really doth it not, doth not act always from any Cause in the Person to whom he doth not extend it, but from his own Will; so God did not refuse to give Grace to some from any Provocation foreseen, but purely as an Act of his own Will. And that *Esau* was not passed by before his Sin was foreseen, yet it was not the Foresight thereof that caused God to pass him by. *Rom. ix. 18. Whom he will he hardens.* Now since God in hardening doth not infuse any evil Principle, but only refuses to give that Grace that alone can mollifie; that Text seems to speak thus: That as God was resolved not to give Grace to some, so his Will should direct him whom they should be. Those that were ordained to Condemnation, were so of old, *Jude 4.* That Ordination to Condemnation was of an earlier Date than the World. Nor is there the least Shew of Unrighteousness in God in this eternal Act of Preterition, any more than if that Act was in Time. I think all must own that God in Time passes by many, and denies to give them special Grace here, or Glory hereafter: And he that denies this, must suppose the whole World to perish, or that they are saved without special Grace. Now if God may not give special Grace in Time, for Want of which such Souls must perish, and yet be righteous, cannot see why he might not in Righteousness resolve so to do before Time; for I think no Reason can be rendered why it should be lawful to do a Thing, and yet not lawful to purpose to do the same. So that we must deny God the Freedom of disposing of his Grace in Time, or own he had Power to do the same, and in Righteousness, before Time.

2d Part of the Proposition. This Number thus passed by from Eternity, were [absolutely passed by]. As it was not *Jacob's* good Deeds done, or foreseen to be done, that caused God to chuse him; so no more was it any Evil done, or foreseen to be done by *Esau*, that caused God not to chuse him: But an Act of pure Sovereignty to both. *Rom. ix. 11. For the Children being not yet born, neither having done any Good or Evil, that the Purpose of God according to Election might stand.* You see *Esau* had done no more to provoke God, than *Jacob* had to please God. 'Tis true, *Esau* after proved a prophane Wretch, and sold his Birth-Right for a Mess of Pottage; yet it was not his Profaness that caused God to leave him out of the Number of the Elect, but an Act of mere Sovereignty, *Rom. ix. 22. What if God willing to shew his Wrath, &c?* God's hiding from the Wise and Prudent, and revealing the same unto Babes, which are the Consequences of Election, and Preterition, are equally attributed to the Sovereign Will of God; *Matt. xi. 26. Even so, Father, for so it seemed Good in thy Sight.* God fixed on *Esau*, and *Pharaoh*, two vile Wretches, as representing the reprobate Part of the World; but it seems to me that he fixed on those rather because he knew that those whom he rejected would be so wicked, than because their Wickedness caused him to reject them. 'Tis expressly said of *Esau*, that when he was rejected he had done no Evil, and therefore that could not be the Cause of his Rejection. Nor can I see how it could be for any Evil foreseen, for it is not consistent with Righteousness in Men to make Laws to punish any by Name for Faults, before those Faults are committed; no Law doth this. Thus God from Eternity decreed to punish *Judas* for betraying his Lord, but he did not execute that Decree, by sending him unto his Place, till he had done it. Now for God to pass by any, not only leaves them liable to Punishment for their after Sins, but is in-itself a fore Judgment. Thus for God to decree that he that continues in final Unbelief shall perish, favours of no Unrighteousness; but actually to damn any before guilty of that Sin, sounds harsh. Thus God decrees to punish for Sin, but here was to be the Intervention of Sin between the Decree and the Punishment.

4th Part of the Proposition. These thus passed by [were ordained to eternal Perdition and Destruction]. God not only resolved not to give them Grace and Glory, but to punish them with everlasting Destruction; and if such were not appointed to Glory, 'tis easie to judge what their Place must be, there being no middle State between Heaven and Hell. As the Kingdom of Heaven was prepared for the Elect, before the Foundation of the World, so the Destruction of the Non-Elect was as certain. 'Tis said, *Jude 4. Ordained of old to that Condemnation;* which Word, as I formerly shew'd, is often used to set forth the Torments of Hell. So *Matt. xxv. 34, 41, 46. Then shall the King say to them on his Right-Hand, come ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for ye before the Foundation of the World; ver. 41. then shall he say also unto them on his Left-Hand, depart from me ye Cursed into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels: ver. 46. And these shall go away into everlasting Punishment, &c.* You see how the Happiness of Saints, and eternal Misery of Sinners, were both prepared. As the Elect were chosen to Salvation, so the rest were appointed to Destruction. Hence *1 Pet. ii. 8. And a Stone of stumbling, and a Rock of Offence, even to them that stumble at the Word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed:* Mind, how their Ruin by stumbling was appointed. Nor is there any Unrighteousness in God in so doing, either as to the Decree of punishing, or as to the Degree, or Duration of Punishment. 1. Not as to the Punishment itself: Kings make Laws to punish such as shall transgress them, by Reason whereof many die which would not, by that Means, if such Laws had not been made; But are they counted unrighteous on that Account? No, they would rather deserve to be thought so, if such Laws had not been made. Was there not a Law to put Murderers to Death, what a Shambles would the World be of honest Men murder'd by the Wicked? And how much better is it for a Few to die deservedly, than for Multitudes to die wrongfully? So tho' by Reason of God's Decrees to punish, many die eternally for their Sin; yet better they die, than such wicked Practices go unpunish'd: For by
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the Punishment God is glorified, but by committing such Sins God is dishonour'd. And if Men will commit such Facts now they know what Punishment is determin'd for them, how much more if there was no Punishment to be inflicted for them? Nor 2. as to the Greatness or Duration of the Punishment. All Punishments are suited to the Nature of the Crime committed. The Punishment will be everlasting, nor is God unrighteous therein. Our Laws that are just take away the Life, which can't be restored, and so for a short Offence the Person suffers an eternal Privation of that Life, and all the Comforts of it, which before he enjoy'd; so tho' the Torments of Hell are endless, God is just; for as Men sin against an infinite and eternal God, on which Account Sin is said to be infinite, or without End, *Job* xxii. 5. so 'tis just for God to decree an eternal Punishment for such Sins; especially seeing had those Persons liv'd to Eternity, they would have sinned to Eternity. Hence when the Apostle tells us how God would punish such as obey'd not the Gospel with everlasting Destruction, he shews us what a righteous Thing it was in God so to do, *2 Thes.* i. 6, 7, 8, 9.

Some seem to take great Offence at that Manner of speaking, if any have used it, that God made some Men to damn them, and yet at the same Time readily grant that he will damn some that he has made, or he must damn none; and so build up with the Right-Hand what they pull'd down with the Left: Since I can see no real Difference between what they deny, and what they affirm; nor any Reason why they should grant the latter, and not the former, unless they can think the Execution of the Decree to be milder than the Decree itself; which so to do is a great Mistake, the Truth being quite in the Reverse. For so long as the Decree was only in Purpose, the Persons in Being were under a Reprieve, tho' under no Possibility to escape; and not only so, but were made Partakers of many Blessings in this World; but the Execution of that Decree at once strips them of those Blessings, and plunges them into an Abyss of Misery. So that it seems milder to say that God made some with a Purpose to damn them, than to say that he damns some that he has made. But some may say the Reason
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why they grant the latter, and deny the former, is this: When they grant the latter, they consider God as punishing for Sin, and so acting as a righteous Judge; but the Reason why they deny the former, is because in making Men to damn them, he doth it because he will, without the least Regard to Sin as the Cause thereof: A great Mistake. I cannot see but that Sin is as much the Cause of the Decree of punishing, as of the Punishment itself; since God had never decreed to punish any particular Person by Name, had he not seen that Person would voluntary commit the Sin he decreed to punish him for; of which more afterward. So that tho' I cannot commend such a Way of speaking, because it may prove a Stone of stumbling to the Weak, nor have I seen such Words in any Man's Writings, yet the Scripture speaks in a Dialect not much unlike this, which when understood may remove the Prejudice. You read of some of whom it is said, *2 Pet. ii. 12. Made to be taken and destroy'd.* Now where is the Difference between made to be damn'd, and made to be taken and destroy'd, except in the Sound of Words? But tho' he made them to be destroy'd, it was not, as some suppose, merely because he would have it so, but Sin was the Cause of their Destruction. For 'tis said, *But chiefly them that walk after the Flesh, in the Lust of Uncleanness, ver. 10. so ver. 13. and shall receive the Reward of Unrighteousness, as those that counted it Pleasure to Riot in the Day-Time, as not ashamed of their Sins; ver. 14. having Eyes full of Adultery, that cannot cease from Sin:* And these are the Persons that are made to be destroy'd. So in the following Part of that 12th Verse, *They shall utterly perish in their own Corruption; i. e. in that wicked Way of living that they had chosen:* Hence call'd *their own Corruption*, to shew that God's making them to destroy them for Sin, did not necessitate them to sin as any impulsive Cause, it only followed by a Necessity of Infallibility; and to shew his Resolution to destroy them for those Sins that he saw they would with the greatest Freedom commit. Nor doth this Freedom in sinning destroy the former Necessity, nor that Necessity destroy that Freedom in sinning. A Necessity of this Nature cannot ob-

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struct the Freedom of the Will in sinning, seeing the Freedom of the Will caused this Necessity. If Man had not freely sinned, nothing in God would have laid him under any Necessity, no not of Infallibility. Man at first could not avoid Sin, because he would not.

Thus again as to *Pharaoh*, who is an Example of God's Dealings with Reprobates, *Exod. ix. 16. And indeed for this very Cause have I raised thee up, to shew in thee my Power*: But how was his Power shewn in him? Not in his Salvation, but in his temporal and eternal Destruction. But this was for his rebelling against God, and not letting his People go. But the Enlargement on this will fall under another Head. I have been the longer on this, that you may see with what Shadows some fright themselves; and how dreadful the same Matter seems in one Form of Words, which seems smooth and inoffensive in another: And that we may see how needful 'tis rightly to state, and understand the Terms stated, before we affirm or deny any Thing to be a Truth. And I can't but think, if our Terms were rightly stated, the Differences among Protestants would be in great Measure ended. Let us therefore study to speak in the same Dialect, and use such Words as may carry in them the least Shew of Offence; and if we can't, let us love each other, where we can in Charity hope we mean the same Thing.

5th Part of the Proposition. This Decree, with respect to the eternal Perdition of such as God passed by, [was positive, and unchangeable]: Like the Law of the *Medes*, that altereth not. 'Tis spoken to the Honour of God, *Job xxiii. 13, 14. But he is in one Mind, and who can turn him? And what his Soul desireth, even that he doeth: For he performeth the Thing that is appointed for me.* Kings make Laws, and often repeal them, which shews the Imperfection of such Legislators, they cannot foresee what may happen: But God changes not, his Will is his Law; and if his Will changes, he changes. As his Purposes of Love are unalterable, hence he is said to *rest in his Love*, and to love with an *everlasting Love*, and make an *everlasting Covenant with them*; and hath promised never to turn away from doing them

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Good; yea, that the Mountains shall depart, and the Hills be removed, rather than his Kindness depart, *Isaiah* liv. 10. So, on the other Hand, his Hatred to the Non-Elect, in the Sense I have shewn, is as unchangeable: As *Esau* could not move his Father to repent, or alter his Mind, tho' he intreated him with Tears, *Hebrews* xii. 17. To suppose God to be capable of changing his Mind, is to suppose him imperfect. If he changes, it must be for the better, or the worse; if for the better, then it implies him to have been imperfect before, for a Perfection of Degrees admits of no Betterness: If he changes his Mind for the worse, it proves him imperfect in that worser Mind. But suppose the Divine Will capable of changing, yet we cannot conceive any Reason in this why it should, seeing God had a certain Foreknowledge of all Things that would come to pass in Time. A Non-Elect Soul can no more believe, than an Elect Soul can die in Unbelief. As all saving Faith is wrought by him, so he well knew his own Mind to whom he purposed to give it. To suppose Faith to be wrought by a Creature-Power, yet God must needs foreknow who would make Use of that Power. Upon God's determining not to give Faith, he knew their Unbelief would follow, and their eternal Ruin follow that Unbelief; as we know that he from whom all Food is withheld must as surely die, as if we saw him dead, Food being the Support of Life. So where God determined not to give Faith, their Destruction must be as certain as his Determination; seeing Faith is as necessary, by Divine Appointment, for the Salvation of our Souls, as Food is for the Preservation of our Lives.

But some prophane Wretch may say, if this is so, then 'tis in vain to strive against the Stream; as good fit still as rise up and fall: What signifies it to believe, or repent, or obey, he is of one Mind? If I am of this Number of Reprobates, all the World can't prevent my Ruin: I'll say to my Soul, while in this World take thy Ease, for I am sure to have none in the World to come; and if I must perish, I'll perish for something: And since this World is like to be my highest Happiness, I'll make the best of it.

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To which I answer, Such desperate Arguings are very provoking to God. We read that when God call'd to *weeping, and to mourning, and to Baldness, and girding with Sackcloth*, there were some who said, *Let us eat and drink, for to Morrow we die; Isa. xxii. 12, 13.* But see what follows ver. 14, *And it was revealed in mine Ears by the Lord of Hosts, surely this Iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die.* Nothing provokes God more, then when those Things that should humble us, and reform us, make us the more proud and wicked. Thou objectest, if this is so, then Faith and Repentance avail nothing, when 'tis only the Want of these that make Destruction so sure. This unchangeable Mind of God to punish, will do that Person no Harm that truly mourns for, and turns from Sin to God. Make but sure to close with Christ, and in so doing thou makest sure that whoever perishes, thou shalt not: And what wouldest thou have more? Canst thou not be contented to be delivered from Hell, unless thou mayst live and die in thy Sins? And as for such desperate Wretches as resolve to be as wicked as they can, let such know it was those Resolutions that render their Escape impossible. Thou shewst a vile Spirit in that, unless thou canst escape Hell, thou wilt have nothing to do with Holiness, and that thou art a Lover of Pleasure more than God, and so will perish justly for so doing. Thou oughtst rather to say, if I must perish, it shall be in a Conformity to God, and not as a Rebel against God; and by such Resolutions thou mayst hope that, whoever doth perish, thou shalt not.

6th Part of the Proposition. This positive Part of this Decree, so far as it respects the Punishment of this or that particular Person, I take [to be on the Account of foreseen Sin]. For tho' Preterition, or passing by some, was absolute, and is attributed to God's Will and Pleasure, yet this had never been but on the Account of Sin. Look as among Men, no Man is bound by the Law of God or Nature to do the same Kindness to all, but may give what is his own to whom he pleases; to some more, to some less, and to some nothing: Yet he is bound by the Law of God and Nature not to hurt, much less to

take away the Life of any without a Cause. So tho' God may dispense his Favours to whom he will, yet we cannot conceive it consistent with the merciful Nature of God to determine any to Hell without just Cause moving him thereunto. For 'tis said, *Lam. iii. 33. He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men; i. e. not without some Cause from them.* It was not a mere Act of his Will, without some Evil in them, or Design of Good in God towards them, moving him thereunto. And if God will not inflict lesser Punishment here, merely to gratifie his Will, much less will he inflict them in Hell, without a Cause. As when Laws are made to punish with Death, those Laws only take hold on the Breakers of those Laws, whose Crime for which they are to die is always mention'd in such Penal Laws, as well as the Penalty that is to be inflicted for such Crimes. And no Law is primarily design'd to punish, but by the Punishment appointed to deter from such Practice as exposed to it, and render'd unworthy of it: So God in determining to punish, did it as the just Reward of Sin. Hence 'tis call'd *Wages, Rom. vi. 23. For the Wages of Sin is Death:* And God never gives the Wages till the Work is done. Tho' it was not *Eſau's* Sin, or *Pharaoh's* Sin, that was the Cause of their being not put into the Book of Life, or of Preterition, yet this was the Cause of their Damnation. Hence, *Rom. ix. 22. What, if God, willing to shew his Wrath, and make his Power known, endured with much Long-suffering the Vessels of Wrath fitted for Destruction?* The Vessels of Wrath were first fitted for it, before they were filled with it. As Election saves none, without the Intervention of the Means appointed to that End; so there never was a Non-Elect Soul sent to Hell, without Sin as the Cause thereof. Hence these certain Persons that are said to be ordained to Condemnation of old, are said to be *ungodly Men, Jude 4.* And those that are said to be made to be destroy'd, *2 Pet. ii. 12.* are said to *bring upon themselves swift Destruction, ver. 1.* Some fancy, others think God sends Souls to Hell wright or wrong; that he first executes, and afterwards judges them: A great Mistake. When God threatens, *Isa. xxvii. 11. He that made them,*
will

will not have Mercy upon them; and he that formed them, will shew them no Favour; he in the same Verse gives the Reason of his Severity, and says, *they were a People of no Understanding; i. e. a brutish and a sottish People*, that understood nothing that was good. God in determining the eternal State of Persons in the Great Day, will not act merely as a Sovereign, to say this or that Soul shall go to Hell because he will have it so, but as a just Judge because they deserve it should be so. There is one Text may give great Light into this Matter, *Rev. xx. 12. And I saw the Dead, small and great, stand before God, and the Books were opened; and another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life; and the Dead were judged out of those Things which were written in those Books, according to their Works.* Observe, here is a Representation of the awful Day of Judgment; and observe, here was the Book of Life, so call'd, as containing the Names of all such as God had decreed unto eternal Life. But here were other Books besides that, as containing the good and evil Deeds of Men, and 'tis said the Dead were judged out of those Things that were written in the [Books]; not any one of them only, but all of them, according to their Works. From whence it seems clear, that Respect will be had both to the Decrees of God, and Works of Men, in order to the determining the eternal State of Man, either as to Happiness, or Misery; so as their Names being found written in the Book of Life shall not secure their Entrance into Heaven without those good Works they were chosen to, or the best Works secure their Entrance into Heaven whose Names are not written in the Book of Life. On the other Hand, none shall be sent to Hell merely because their Names are not found written in the Book of Life, who have not done some Evil; for all the Books were opened. To clear this further, let us suppose an Elect Soul call'd to the Bar, and Christ the Judge to say to the Angels that are to attend the Service of that Day, search the Book of Life, and see if this Man's Name is found there; they answer, it is done as thou commandest, and here we find it written with thy own Hand, that this Man by Name, living at such a Time, and in such a Place, should enter in-

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to Life. Let us suppose the Judge further to say, search the other Books, wherein all good Deeds are recorded; they answer, it is done, and here we find it recorded of the same Man by Name, that such a Day he heartily clofed with Christ, and from that Time truly repented of, and turned from Sin, and solemnly devoted himself to the Service of God, and continu'd exercising himself to keep a Conscience void of Offence towards God and Man to the Day of his Death. Hereupon the Judge acquits him, saying, as *Matt. xxv. 21. Well done, good and faithful Servant; — enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.* In the next Place, suppose some Reprobates to come trembling at the Bar, and the Judge commands the Angels to search the Book of Life if their Names are found therein; the Angels answer, it is done, and none of their Names are found there, let 'em die. But let us suppose the Judge to say, before I give Sentence of Death, search the other Book of all evil Deeds done; they answer, it is done, and here we find it recorded of one of the Prisoners at the Bar by Name, that he lived where the Gospel was purely preached, yet would not so much as hear it; yea, that he was a Scoffer at, and a Persecutor of, such as were better than himself; and a Hater of all that was good. Of another of the Prisoners it is found, that tho' he heard the Gospel, and had many a sweet Call, yet he never would comply therewith, but liv'd in Omission of those Duties that thy faithful Servants with the most pressing Motives oft exhorted him unto; yea, that he was guilty of gross Impieties, tho' often warned against them, and of the Punishment that would certainly be inflicted for them. Of a third it is found, that he indeed was cast in the dark Parts of the Earth, and never so much as heard the joyful Sound, and doth not stand chargable of refusing to comply with the Calls of Grace, as the former was, yet he sinn'd in not obeying the Dictates of Conscience, which proves him to be worthy of Death. Hereupon the Judge says to the Prisoners, Guilty, or Not Guilty? What have you to say for yourselves why Sentence should not pass upon you? They stand trembling, pale, and speechless, like that Man that wanted the Wedding Garment. The Judge then denounces the Sentence

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tence of Death, as *Matt. xxv. 41. Depart from me, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, &c.* not because not elected, but because they had omitted what they ought to have done, and had done what they ought not to have done: As *Isa. iii. 11. Woe unto the Wicked, it shall go ill with him, for the Reward of his Hands shall be given.* And thus this Great Day is concluded, according to that general Rule, *John v. 28, 29. — All that are in their Graves shall hear his Voice, and come forth; they that have done Good, unto the Resurrection of Life; and they that have done Evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation:* Thus we read *Rev. xx. 15.* Nor is here the least Shew of Injustice, or Unrighteousness; since God herein inflicts no more upon them, than was deserved by them. Nay, it would look much liker Unrighteousness not to do it; since it is as much the Part of a righteous Judge to condemn and punish the Guilty, as to clear the Innocent. Says the Apostle, *Rom. iii. 5, 6. — Is God unrighteous who taketh Vengeance? God forbid, for then how shall God judge the World?*

God, by his infallible Omniscience, could not but know all the evil Actions that ever would be done, and the Persons that would commit those Actions, as certainly as when those Actions were done. *David* says, *Pf. cxxxix. 15, 16. Thine Eyes did see my Substance yet being imperfect, and in thy Book all my Members were written; which in Continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them:* And no doubt but God as well knew all his evil Actions before committed, as he knew the various Parts of his Body before they were formed. If God had not certainly fore-known *Adam's Sin*, he would not have set up his Son from everlasting as Mediator to redeem him, or any of his Posterity; seeing then that early Contrivance of infinite Wisdom might have been useless. 'Tis observable to the Point in Hand what we read, *Matt. ii.* God warned *Joseph* to depart into *Ægypt*; for says he, *ver. 13. Herod will seek the young Child to destroy him:* He knew what he would do, before he did it; and so it came to pass, *ver. 18.* Yea, God foresaw the evil Act, tho' coloured over with specious Pretences to worship Christ, *ver. 8.* Thus Christ, as he was
God,

God, told his Disciples, before it was done, that one of them should betray him, *Matt. xxvi. 21.* Thus Christ foretold Peter's Denial of him, *Matt. xxvi. 34. Verily I say unto you, that this Night, before the Cock Crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.* Mind, how positive he is; Verily it shall be so: A kind of an Oath. Yea, this Night, about such an Hour: He knew with equal Certainty the Time as well as the Thing: Yea, the very Circumstance; namely, Thrice. Poor Peter, no doubt but in Love to his Lord, seems resolv'd if possible to bring him under a Disappointment; *ver. 35. Tho' I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee:* Yet he did it, in the Time and Manner foretold, *ver. 72.* And 'tis said, *ver. 75. Peter remembred the Words of Jesus, &c.* He then knew whose Words would stand, Christ's or his; and he went out and wept bitterly; to shew that Christ's Foreknowledge of his Sin did not remove, or in the least extenuate the Guilt thereof; but rather increased it, in committing so great a Sin after so clear a Warning on Christ's Side, and so solemn a Protestation against it on his own.

Nor doth God only foreknow Actions, before they are done, but he foreknows Thoughts also; not only what Thoughts we do think, but what Thoughts we shall think: *Psal. cxxxix. 2. Thou understandest my Thoughts afar off.* Thoughts are more hardly known than Actions; yet God knows those, even long before they enter into our Minds, yea when afar off.

I shall add; God not only knows what will come to pass, but what possibly may come to pass. He not only knew the World he would make, before he made it, but all the Worlds he could have made. To suppose that there was not a perfect Idea in the eternal Mind of all that would be made before it did exist, is to suppose God to make he knew not what: And so to act beneath the meanest Architect; who has a perfect Form in his own Mind of the House he is to build, before one Stone is laid. To suppose God to know no more than what he made, is to render him a finite Being: For as all created Beings are finite; so for God to know no more than those, is to render him as finite as they are. To suppose God to know some Things, and not others, are unworthy Thoughts of God;

God; who, as an infinite Being, grasps in at once with equal Certainty all Things that are, have been, shall be, and that possible may be. 'Tis said of God, *Pf. cxlvii. 5.*

His Understanding is infinite. An infinite Understanding has no Bounds or Limits, it never begins to know what before it did not know, or ceases to know what it once did know, but always knows what is knowable. And herein God excels all finite Capacities of Men or Angels, many Futurites lie conceal'd from both these; and those that they do know, are either founded on Divine Revelation, or on second Causes, and not on any immediate Knowledge they have of the Things themselves. No Man can tell what another Man will do, nor what he himself shall do. *Peter* little thought he should deny his Master, yet did it. Thus when *Elisha* told *Hazael* what Ravages he would commit, *2 Kings viii. 12.* he answer'd, *ver. 13. Is thy Servant a Dog, that he should do this great Thing?* And yet did it. But God cannot be mistaken as to his Knowledge of all our Actions, whether good or evil. Not as to what is formally good, since 'tis from his immediate Influence that such Actions are done; nor yet of what is evil, for tho' the Evil of such Actions is from ourselves, yet 'tis owing unto God that such Actions are done; for in him we live, move, and have our Beings: Nor is it consistent with the Infinity of his Knowledge to be ignorant of, or not to know all Futurities, as well evil as good. So that tho' Things may be done by us in a Way of Contingency, yet the same Things with respect to God are done with the greatest Certainty. And tho' sometimes God speaks after the Manner of Men, as *Isa. v. 2. And he looked that it should bring forth Grapes, and it brought forth wild Grapes;* yet we are no more from hence to conclude that God was really disappointed in his Expectation, than that God has really the Parts of a human Body, because he is said to have Eyes, or Hands; or that the same Vinyard was secur'd by a Tower, in the Midst of it, or hath a Wine-Press therein.

And since God had such a certain Foreknowledge of all the Evil that ever would be committed, there was no more Shew of Injustice in God to pre-ordain a Punish-

ment to be inflicted, suited to the Nature of such Actions, than to ordain such Punishment on such particular Persons as have done them, after the Actions are done: Nor yet so great a Shew of Injustice. To clear this thus, Suppose no such Decree to punish made antecedent to the Fact, and when the Fact is done, then God begins to determine in his Mind, and to reveal in his Word, that he resolves to punish for such Facts with everlasting Torments: We may suppose the Persons accused to plead thus for themselves, Lord, if thou hadst but discover'd thy Purpose to destroy us for such Facts before we had done them, we should never at once have offended Thee, and brought such Destruction on ourselves. But how hard doth it seem when the Facts are done, and can't be undone, to punish us thus severely. On the other Hand, let us suppose the Decree to punish to be made, and revealed before such Facts were committed; and then every Mouth is stopped: He is worthy of many Stripes that knows his Lord's Will, and did it not. And if it is righteous for God to reveal his Decree to punish for Sin, before some particular Persons have committed that Sin, tho' the Persons have a Being, it is righteous for God to determine so to do, before any one Creature had a Being. Yea, let me add, Such a Decree to punish for Sin, before the Creature did sin or exist, carries in it a far less Shew of Injustice than never to make any Decree to punish, as well as to make a Decree to punish made collateral to the Fact done; it being the Property of Justice as well to punish a Person that is guilty as to acquit an innocent Person. As all Decrees to punish for such and such Crimes are primarily design'd for, and have a natural Tendency to prevent such Crimes being committed; so was God never to resolve to punish for Sin, what a Flood-Gate would it open to all Impiety when so strong a Propensity and Certainty of Impunity met together. So that this Doctrine of Reprobation, that looks with such a frightful Aspect on some, who see into the true Nature of the Thing much as he that saw Men as Trees walking, is really much milder, and more agreeable to Justice, than any Doctrine contrary thereunto can be. The making a Decree before Sin is committed

to punish it when it is committed, is milder than to make such a Decree after it is committed: The former tends to prevent both the Sin and Punishment, the Punishment being not absolute; the latter tends to ensnare the Creature, by permitting that to be done which otherwise (humanly speaking) might not have been done. So that I cannot see what some Men would have granted for the clearing the Justice of God, unless a Decree never to punish any for Sin; and was ever this granted, they would be much further from proving the Point than now they are. And further, to suppose that God did not before the Sin was committed resolve to punish it, and after it was committed then it came in his Mind so to do, what a Change must this argue in God, who is said to be without Variableness and Shadow of turning, *James* i. 17. and of one Mind, *Job* xxiii. 13. It doth not prove any Change in God to decree to punish before Time, and to execute that Decree in Time; the former is an imminent Act in the Mind of God, the latter a transient Act passing on a sinful Object: But his executing in Time what he decreed before Time, proves him much rather unchangeable; but for God to determine in his own Mind in Time to do what he did not determine before Time, must of Necessity, so far as I can see, argue a Change in God.

Nor did God only foreknow what sinful Actions would be committed, and resolve to punish for them; but he certainly foreknew who would commit those Actions, and as positively decreed to punish them. Kings do the former, but not the latter; it being beyond their Knowledge certainly to know who will violate those Laws made, and so expose themselves to the Sanction of them: But God as well knew the Persons by Name that would commit the Sins, as he knew the Sins that would be committed. God doth not seem to speak thus, I decree to punish for such Sins if committed; but thus, I certainly know such Persons by Name will voluntarily commit such Sins, and therefore decree to punish those very Persons for those Sins. God did not only foreknow that some one would seek to destroy Christ, but tells *Joseph* the Man by Name, *Matt.* ii. 13. *For Herod will seek the*

young Child to destroy him. Christ, as God, not only knew that some one Person would betray him, but he knew that *Judas* by Name would be the Person; as is clear from *John* vi. 64. *For Jesus knew from the Beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him:* Not only from the Beginning of their Profession, but before all Time, as the Word is used *John* i. 1. Thus Christ not only told his Disciples that one of them should betray him, *John* xiii. 21. but being asked *ver.* 25, *Lord, who is it?* Christ answer'd, *ver.* 26. *He it is to whom I shall give a Sop, when I have dipped it:* And when he had dipped the Sop, he gave it to *Judas Iscariot*, the Son of *Simon*. See how he points out the Man; and because there was another of that Name, that we might know he knew the individual Person, as well as the Name, he is call'd *Iscariot*, the Son of *Simon*: And we never read of such another. And as he knew that *Judas* would be the Man to commit the Sin, so he was the Man decreed to bear the Punishment: Hence he is said to go to his Place, *Acts* i. 25. *i. e.* the Place suited to him, and appointed for him; and call'd *The Son of Perdition*, *John* xvii. 12.

But some may say, Is it not hard for Man thus to be stak'd down to Misery? I answer, in executing of all Punishments there is a kind of staking down, to prevent their Escape, or else none would undergo it. Felons are Hand-cufft; and such as are Burnt, are fasten'd down to a Stake. Now tho' this may seem hard, and is so in one Sense, as it renders their Escape impossible, yet their being so staked down is no ways inconsistent with Justice, or a Reflection on the Legislators, seeing their own Sin voluntarily committed brought them to that Stake; so that it would rather look like Injustice not to do it. Thus tho' God as it were stakes down some to Punishment by a Decree that can't be repeal'd, yet since their Sin was rather the Cause of that Decree, than that Decree the Cause of their Sin, there is no more Injustice in God to punish such Persons, than for a King to stake down a Murderer to be burnt. 'Tis observable, Tho' *Judas* by Name was foreknown to be the Person that should betray Christ, and he by Name appointed to go to his Place, yet 'tis

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not attributed to the Foreknowledge of God that he went to his own Place, but to his Transgression, *Acts* i. 25. his Transgression is brought in both as the Cause why he fell from his Office, and why he went to his Place: And 'tis call'd *his own Place*, the Place of his own procuring: And to shew he had never came there by any antecedent Decree, if it had not been for his Sin. Let none therefore blame God for punishing, since herein he acts but as a righteous Judge; but much rather blame themselves for being such Rebels, as to provoke a merciful God (who is so slow to Anger, and has sworn he delights not in the Death of his Creatures) thus severely to punish them. Men love Sin, but not to bear the Punishment due for it, and hate all such Truths as may give Disturbance to their Minds in committing it; and if they dare but speak freely, would as much shew their Dislike of God's punishing any in Time, as his decreeing to punish any before Time: Since the Justice of God is as clear in the latter, as the former: They don't love to be tormented before the Time, and do all they can to keep the Thoughts of Hell out of their Minds till they come there, and can meditate nothing else but Terrour.

I can't but think that when true Religion flourishes, that there will be fewer Enemies to these great Truths. The stronger Mens Hopes are of getting to Heaven thro' electing Love, and Grace, the more they will love to hear of it; and the weaker their Fears are of going to Hell, with the less Dread will they hear of it: But no Wonder if in our degenerate Age, when so many are sunk into the Dregs of Profaneness, and others are content with a Form of Godliness, when so Few have their Evidences clear for Heaven, and so many carry the Block-Mark of Reprobation on their Foreheads, that the Doctrine of Election is slighted, and that of Reprobation abhor'd: No Man can be suppos'd to be in love with his Chain.

What hath been spoken on this Head gives Occasion for this Question, Seeing God hath ordained a certain Number to everlasting Punishment, as the just Reward of Sin, and this Number cannot be increased or diminished; What must we think of the eternal State of Non-Elect Infants, that die in Infancy, before they have committed any

any Sin to deserve this Punishment? For according to what you have said, as they are not elected they cannot get to Heaven, nor can they go to Hell without being guilty of Sin to deserve that Punishment.

To which I answer, If the Word of God was but understood, and firmly believed, it would not be so hard a Thing as some think to give a satisfactory Answer to this seeming Difficulty: But if Men will pretend to be wise above what is written, or set up Reason against Divine Revelation, and as *Eve* believe the Devil, the Father of Lies, before the God of Truth, it will be hard to convince such by Scripture. O the Windings and Turnings of Men, to evade the Force of such Scriptures as fall not in with their Opinions; and if possible to force such Texts to speak in Favour of them, as always design'd to speak against them! But how unworthy are such to be call'd Christians that will not submit to, and sit down satisfied with what Christ has revealed in his Word. Now since there are so many that can't think any Infants in Danger of perishing, I shall consider what their Charity is grounded on, and what a sandy Foundation some build these Hopes upon. Some suppose Original Sin is done away in Baptism, and look on that as a regenerating Ordinance. Suppose it was so, yet this cannot secure all Infants, because Thousands in the World die, and know nothing of it; no, not the Parents: And many die unbaptized, for Want of Opportunity to be baptized. But suppose all Infants were baptized, I am far from thinking that can secure their Happiness: There must be an inward Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire, as well as an outward Baptism with Water, in order thereunto. Our Lord tells us, he that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved, to shew how little the latter would avail without the former. If Regeneration and Forgiveness of Sin, as some suppose, did inseparably attend Baptism, then there must of Necessity be a total falling from Grace; since we see so many that were baptized in Infancy, afterward to live and die in open Profaness. Sin is of too deep a Dye to be washed away with Water, the Apostle tells us more wholesome Doctrine, in saying, *Without Shedding of Blood is no Remission*; Heb. ix. 22. The E-

vil we receive By the first *Adam*, can be removed no other Way but by the second *Adam*, and by the Application of what he has done to our Souls. Others suppose a Middle State, which they call *Limbus Infantium*, to which all Infants go that die unbaptiz'd, where they remain without Joy or Sorrow; and of this Mind are the *Papists*, and I wish they were the only Favourers of this wild Opinion: But let the Defenders of it be who they will, it wants Confirmation from Scripture, and so ought to be rejected. We read there but of Two Places after Death, answerable to the Two States Men are in here, a Heaven and a Hell; either in *Abraham's Bosom*, or in Flames. We read of but Two Sorts, either Sheep or Goats; but to the Right-Hand, or to the Left; unless some Means is found out of late by our learned Age, to go to the Right-Hand and to the Left-Hand together. We read but of Two Sentences at the Great Day, *Come you Blessed*, or, *Go you Cursed*, unless some can prevail for what *Balak* requested, *Numbers* xxiii. 25. *Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all*. I don't read of any particular Sentence denounc'd against Infants, nor any particular Place assigned to them. Either Infants are obnoxious to Punishment, or not; if not, What should keep them out of Heaven? If they are, What should keep them out of Hell? I doubt not but there are Degrees of Punishment in Hell, suited to the different Degrees of Sin on Earth; but if there are so many distinct Places of Torment as there are Degrees, there may, for ought I know, be a Thousand Hells: But One Hell is enough, no Need to contend for more; it is made deep and large, *Isa.* xxx. 33.

I come now to offer my Thoughts on the Question, which I shall do in some few Particulars, as

1st, All Infants deserve Hell, as involved in the Guilt of *Adam's* first Sin, and as defiled with his corrupt and depraved Nature; not that they are thought to commit the Act of eating the forbidden Fruit, which Act our first Parents only were chargeable with, no more than Believers are look'd upon in Christ as having actually fulfill'd the Law in their own Persons, but only in Christ as their Head. When God created *Adam*, he threatened, that in the Day he did eat of the forbidden Fruit he should die,

die, he being by divine Appointment a publick Head of all that should come out of his Loins: Had he stood, they had all been Sharers with him in all the Happiness he was possess'd of; but if he fell, they equally came in as Fellow-Sufferers, as to this Life, and That to come; not but that Grace could prevent his Ruin, and theirs too, but I am speaking of what God in strict Justice might have done: For as *Adam*, we have Reason to hope, was sav'd by Faith in that early Promise, *Gen. iii. 15.* so no doubt but many of his Seed are, dying at all Ages. Now when God threatned that if he did eat he should die, we are to understand all those Deaths that by Sin we are liable to; Corporal, Spiritual, and Eternal: Had not *Adam* sinn'd, neither he nor his Posterity had been liable to either of these Deaths; but having sinn'd, he and they became equally liable to them all, to one as much as the other. So that where we see any one of those inflicted, it evidently proves they deserve all. Now as it is evident that Infants die corporally, so it proves they were worthy to die eternally. The Doctrine of original Sin, as transmitted from *Adam* to his Posterity, both as to the Guilt and Pollution of it, is a Doctrine that hath been believed by many of our antient Protestant Divines, as is now to be seen in their Works. The Church of *England* are clearly of this Opinion, or at least once were; when they give Thanks to God after Baptism, that he had regenerated that Child in Baptism, it clearly shews what they thought of its State before. There could be no Need of, or indeed Room for Regeneration, if the Persons before were not defiled by Sin, Regeneration being a making us new Creatures. And when they oblig'd the Sureties of the Child in its Name to forsake the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, What other Ideas can we form of those Words, but that they thought that Child to be in *Satan's* Slavery, and under the Bondage of Sin, or how could it forsake them? But I have a better Testimony than from Man; the Scripture is full to prove that all *Adam's* Posterity are involv'd in his Guilt, and Partakers of his depraved Nature, as soon as we have a Being. 1. That they are all involv'd in his Guilt, *Eph. ii. 3.* — *And were by Nature the Children of Wrath, even as others*

You see how he brings in all as Children of Wrath, and that not by Practice only, but by Nature; nor can I put any milder Sense on these Words, *Children of Wrath*, but that they deserved God's Wrath as soon as they had the human Nature. So *Romans* v. 17, 18. *For if by one Man's Offence, Death reigned by one*; the first [one] respects the Person sinning, the second [one] respects the Offence; and adds *ve. 18. therefore as by the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation*: What can be clearer? (2.) The Scripture is as clear to prove that we share with him in the Depravity of Nature, *Psalms* li. 5. *Behold, I was shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me.* So *Psalms* lviii. 3. *The Wicked are estranged from the Womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking Lies.* Can we suppose that these, and such like Texts, amount to no more than this, That *Adam's* Posterity, by Vertue of their being to him as a Fallen Head, are under a Remote Liableness to be overcome by a Temptation? I confess I envy not that Man's Light, who can content himself with such a Loss. If this is All, that Man is hereby liable to die for his own actual Sins when he consents to a Temptation, I cannot see what Damage *Adam's* Posterity, or even he himself received, in this Respect, by his Fall. I grant in other Respects they might, as thereby they became liable to the Miseries of this Life, and that which is to come, but not merely as to the Depravity of Nature; for it is evident that *Adam* in his best State was liable to be overcome by a Temptation, and actually was so, and by slight Temptation too.

Objectjon. *Adam* had Power to have withstood the Temptation if he would, so have not we; and herein we suffer by his Fall. *Ans.* *Adam's* Posterity either have a Power to withstand Temptations, or they have not: If they have a Power, and will not make use of it, they are in the very Condition that *Adam* was in before his Fall, and so we have lost Nothing: If it is said they have no Power to resist the Temptation, then it must be owned they have lost Strength by the Fall. But then I ask, How came that Weakness, but from an Antecedent Depravity and vicious Inclination in the Soul? So that the yielding

to a Temptation is not the Cause of that Depravity, nor can it be said to commence only from thence, but that Antecedent Depravity was the Cause of our being overcome by that Temptation. Nor can I see how it is possible that an Infant in the Womb, or as soon as born can actually sin by consenting to a Temptation. To clear this consider, In doing any Thing formally good or evil, Two Things are necessary which Infants cannot have, *viz.* An Understanding to know what is Good and what is Evil, and a Will to consent to what they know to be so. 'Tis far easier to conceive how an Infant should act Faith, than how it should actually sin: For tho' an Understanding and a Will are as necessary towards the former as the latter, yet 'tis easier to conceive how it should have such an Understanding and a Will to believe than to sin. 'Tis God that gives this Understanding to Adult Persons, 1 *John* v. 20. and a Will, as *Psalms* cx. 3. and he can if he will give both to Infants, without the least Blemish to any of his Attributes; yea, to the Glory of his Grace, Power, &c. But how should an Infant have those to sin? 'Tis not natural to know what is Good or Evil, and to suppose that God should in a supernatural Way give such an Understanding and Will only to make them capable to sin, seems much more to reflect on the Divine Perfections than to say the Soul when created is viciously inclin'd. But some may say, when they speak of Consenting to a Temptation, they don't mean when in the Womb, or as soon as born, but when it begins to have some Use of its Reason: Now, tho' this seems better than the other, and to have more Weight in it, yet will be found wanting when duly consider'd: For suppose it so, yet how many Thousand Infants die before that Time; and what must we think of their eternal State, supposing them to be Non-elect Infants? Will you say they perish under the Guilt of *Adam's* Sin, tho' they don't partake of his corrupt Nature? This is easier said than proved: For as God brings none of the Elect to Heaven, no not by the Righteousness of Christ, but such as are brought into some Likeness to Christ; that so they may be fitted for Heaven by the latter, as well as brought to Heaven by the former: So such as perish, are said to be fitted for Destruction.

Destruction. Now, tho' Guilt exposes to Hell, it does not properly fit for Hell; that Fitness rather arises from the evil Disposition of the Mind, as depraved; by Reason of which there is an Agreeableness in them to that cursed Company in Hell, and to do as they do. When the Apostle had told us how the Vessels of Wrath were fitted for Destruction, the great Instance thereof was *E-sau*, and that before born, or before he had actually done any Evil: So that his Fitness for Destruction did not only arise from his profane Practice, but from an antecedent Depravity in his Nature, and that before he was born. Or if we carry it higher to God's Decrees from Eternity, before *E-sau* was conceived, it then proves that his Decree of punishing him was founded not only on *E-sau's* evil Deeds, but also on the natural Depravity of his Mind, cleaving to him before he was born, or had done any evil Act, that natural Depravity being the Spring and Source of all his After-wickedness. So that we have no Reason to think that God will damn for Guilt, where there is no Pollution. If any ask, How came this Depravity into the Soul? I answer, or rather let that Man after God's own Heart do it for me, *Psalms* li. 5. *Behold, I was shapen in Iniquity, &c.* What is thus clearly proved from Scripture, and confirmed by Experience, ought to be believed, tho' we cannot dive to the Bottom of all the Mysteries thereof.

Object. To say the Soul is defiled at its first Creation, reflects on the Purity of God; for he cannot make a Thing impure: It cannot be consistent with the Divine Perfections, to create a Soul viciously inclined.

Ans. That the Soul is viciously inclined from its first Creation, seems a great Truth; as is clear from Scripture, *Gen. v. 3. And Adam begat a Son in his own Likeness, after his Image.* So we are said to bear the Image of the Earthy, *1 Cor. xv. 49.* And as this is clear from Scripture, so I firmly believe God did not create a Soul viciously inclined, by infusing any positive evil Habits into it. Yet both these may be granted, and yet this Truth maintained: By considering this evil Propensity naturally in us, as consisting in a Privation of that Rectitude it originally was endu'd with; tho' the removing or withholding

that original Rectitude will as certainly be the Occasion of such vicious Inclinations, as the infusing any positive evil Habits is the Cause thereof. For as the withdrawing of Light occasions Darknes; so God's removing from, or not giving Grace to a Soul, occasions a sad Disorder in that Soul. For it is not rational to suppose that Man that is made for an endless Duration, and that after this Life will be fixed in an eternal State of Happiness or Misery, according to the State he was in, and Works that he had done, should remain, or be in a State, wherein neither that or his Actions are good nor evil: We may as well suppose a middle State between Heaven and Hell in the World to come, or a middle State between a Covenant of Works and a Covenant of Grace in this World. As all Men are under some Law; so all their Actions are approv'd, or condemn'd by that Law they are under: There is no Medium of Participation, or Negation, that the same Act, numerically consider'd, should be both lawful and unlawful, or neither lawful nor unlawful. Christ tells us, *Matt. xii. 30. He that is not for me, is against me*: No Neutrality in this Case. Thus as to the Point in Hand, with this Difference carefully to be observed; whereas human Laws extend only to Words or Actions, the divine Law extends to Dispositions. If God withdraws his Grace from the Soul, or refuses to give Grace to the Soul, this Grace being the Spring of all evangelical Obedience, and the very Rectitude of the Soul, his so doing leaves the Soul in a sinful State; nor doth God herein take away more than he at first gave, since the Soul hereby is but reduced to the same State it would have been in had God never given those Gifts to it. Nor doth this in the least seem to reflect on the divine Perfections, for as God was under no Necessity at first to have endu'd Man with such gracious Principles, so he had as much Liberty to take them away; especially if we consider that God openly declar'd to *Adam* he would do it, if he sinned. If therefore *Adam*, after such Warning given, regarded neither God's Glory, nor his own, nor Posterities Welfare, it was just with God by Way of Punishment to take that from him which he had so kindly bestow'd upon him, and that was so greatly abused by him. And as God might do
this

this in Righteousness to *Adam*, so for the same Reason he might refuse to give it to his Offspring, who were to suffer with him. But lest some should not understand what I mean, I shall make it plain by this following Similitude. A Man going to set up his Trade, and wanting Stock; a Friend lends him 100*l.* tells him he desires no Requitall for it, but expects it to be ready whenever he calls it in. After a While the Creditor, hearing he takes to evil Courses, calls in his Money; hereupon he, being disabled to go on in his Business, takes to robbing, and so comes to a miserable untimely End. Now all must own, that this calling in his Money was the Occasion of his Sin and Punishment; but this not being the Cause thereof, but his wicked Practice, hence the Creditor is so far from being to blame for calling in his Money, that all (unless such as were like himself) must commend him for so doing. Thus God lends *Adam*, at his coming into the World, a Stock of Grace, sufficient to secure him and all his from Want, so long as he did what he ought to do, and had Power to do; but withal tells him, that if he offended him, he would strip him naked, and take all from him: But he soon betray'd his Trust, and gives Credit to *Satan* rather than to God. God, being justly provok'd, takes away all that he had lent him, and leaves him to be led Captive by him whom he had obey'd. But was God to blame for calling in his Grace, or *Adam* for preferring an Apple, yea the Devil before God? Surely all but such as would do as *Adam* did must acquit God, and lay *Adam's* Sin and Misery at his own Door. To clear this further from some Texts of Scripture, 'tis said of Christ, that he was set for the Fall of many, *Luke ii. 34.* But how could that be? The *Jews* expected Christ to come in a pompous Manner; but finding him to come in the Form of a Servant, and not in the Grandeur of an earthly Prince, they rejected him, and so fell, and perished: But tho' they despised him for that which should have enhanced his Love to them, and advanc'd theirs to him, Was he to blame in stooping so low to help poor lost Man; or they, in being offended with him because he did so? 'Tis easie to answer. So *John xv. 22.* *If I had not come, and spoken unto them,*
they

they had not had Sin; but now they have no Cloak for their Sin: Which shews that the Coming of Christ proved an Occasion of Sin to some; yet was so far from being a Cause of it, that it tended to the mortifying of it. And from hence we may see how Evil may ensue from what is Good: And so upon God's withdrawing his Grace. I shall confirm this from one Text more, *Exodus vii. 13. And he hardened Pharaoh's Heart.* But how did God harden his Heart? Will any say by infusing any Evil into him? If so, then he may as well do it in forming the Soul; but if it is said, as generally it is, that he harden'd his Heart by not giving that Grace that only could soften it, and so his Hardness follow'd thereon, then it proves that 'tis eno' to leave a Soul under vicious Inclinations for God to withdraw his Grace from, or not give it to a Soul, without infusing any evil Habits or Principles into that Soul. And I can't but think it much safer to let the Point of original Sin turn here, as to the Depravity and Pollution of our Nature, then to speak so contrary to Scripture, Experience, and Reason itself, as to deny a natural Depravity, and make it only acquired; merely on Imagination of they know not what; and to run upon such a dangerous Rock as to be forced to say, that God imputes the Guilt of Sin to Infants that no Ways share in the Pollution of *Adam's* depraved Nature; which seems as much to reflect on God's Justice, as his creating a Soul impure can reflect on his Holiness. But some may say, 'tis no absurd Thing to separate Guilt from the filthy Act of Sin, for it was so in Christ, on whom the Guilt of Sin was charged, without the least inherent Defilement, or vicious Inclination thereunto; Who dare deny the former, or affirm the latter? To this I answer, The Similitude will not hold. Christ indeed had no inherent Defilement cleaving to him, because it was impossible he should; but it is not so as to us: And further, I am apt to think some make more Distinctions as to the Nature of Sin with respect to the Guilt, and Fact, and Filth, than the Thing will well bear, if narrowly look'd into. This I think we may safely say, that whatever Evil was in Sin, call it what you will, that render'd us obnoxious to eternal Punishment, all that Evil was set to Christ's Account; and the

the denying of this will (I presume) be attended with as great Difficulty, as the denying what was before proposed. I shall illustrate my Meaning, by alluding to *Philemon* 18, 19. *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine Account; I Paul have written with mine own Hand, I will repay it:* Thus Christ seems to say to Justice, if any of those that my Father hath given me hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, I Jesus do under mine own Hand engage to satisfy for the Wrong done; put that on mine Account. But as no Man in his right Mind will from *Paul's* Engagements once suppose that he did the Wrong, or contracted those Debts by any wicked Course of Life, hence he saith [he] hath wronged thee, or [he] oweth thee ought. So tho' Christ hath engaged to satisfy divine Justice for all the Wrongs the Elect have done, and Debts they owe; yet it is [they] that have done the Wrong, not he; [they] that contracted the Debt, not he: They did ill in contracting the Debt, he did a worthy Deed in clearing them from the Obligation they were under to Punishment on Account of the Wrong done. They by doing the Wrong dishonour'd God, and ruin'd their own Souls; he in satisfying for the Wrong done brought much Glory to the former, and most effectually and eternally secur'd the latter. And thus I have finished my first Particular, by Way of Answer to the fore-nam'd Question; and proved that all Infants are involv'd in the Guilt of *Adam's* first Transgression, and defil'd in the Corruption of his Nature, before they are capable of actual Sin: Even as soon as they have a Being. And I hope I have shewn how this may be done without any Blemish to the divine Perfections, even by withdrawing or not giving that Grace that *Adam* had abused, and God had absolute Power to dispose of. And have also shewn the great Difference between being an Occasion of Sin, and a proper Cause thereof: And how Christ himself was an Occasion of Sin, but by no means the Cause thereof by doing any Thing that had a natural Tendency thereunto.

There can be no just Cause to reflect on the divine Perfections on the Account of that Depravity that cleaves to the Soul when at first united to the Body, if we consider

sider how the Soul was at first created; which is clearly express'd, *Gen. i. 27. So God created Man in his own Image, in the Image of God created he him:* By this Image of God, we are not to understand any corporal Resemblance, God being incorporeal; but that God endu'd him with such natural Faculties, and moral Perfections of true Holiness and Righteousness, as did in some Measure resemble those matchless Perfections of him that created him. Thus Man was made upright, and altogether free from the least Stain and Pollution of Sin. When God had finished his Creating-Work, 'tis said, *Gen. i. 31. And God saw every Thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good.* All the Species being thus created, do convey their own Nature to their Individuals; Beasts produce Beasts, Birds produce Birds, Fish produce Fish, and Men produce Men: Yet neither of these can properly be call'd Creation, but rather Production: For to create, is to make Something out of Nothing; but here is pre-existing Matter convey'd from the Species to the Individuals, and each teeming Species conveys its own Nature to its Individuals. Beasts don't produce Men, nor Men produce Beasts: Beasts produce senseless Creatures, like themselves; the Individuals resemble the Species, not only as to the Make and Shape of the Body, but as much in their Faculties. Thus Man produces Man, with outward Form and Shape like himself, and as like himself in Soul as Body: Hence 'tis said, *Gen. v. 3. Adam begat a Son in his own Likeness, after his own Image;* which hath not respect so much to the Shape of his Body, as to the Disposition of the Mind. 'Tis call'd *his own Image*, in Opposition to that Image of God that he had lost by Sin. This Image was depraved, and viciously inclined, like himself when fallen. For as *Adam*, had he continued as created, had convey'd that Image of God to his Posterity; so being a fallen Head, he convey'd his depraved Nature to his Offspring. *Who can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean? Not one. Job xiv. 4.* And observe; 'tis not said God created *Adam* a Son in his Likeness, but *Adam* begat him so. God having finished his own immediate Work, now leaves Nature to do its own. Nor is he chargeable with the E-

vil produced by this Means, tho' there is some Concurrency of Providence hereunto. As a Man that robs on the Highway could not have done it, if God had nor originally given him Eyes to see, Feet to walk, and Hands to act; yet God is not to blame for giving him those, but he that make such Use of them. Thus God gives Man a Nature pure and undefiled; Man corrupts this Nature, and then conveys this corrupted Nature to his Posterity. Suppose we cannot exactly account for the Manner how this Defilement seizes on the Soul, whether it comes so out of the Hands of God, and is consider'd as consisting in a mere Privation of that Original Rectitude which the Soul lost by Sin, as a just Punishment thereof; or whether we conceive of it as convey'd to the Soul from the Parent, as soon as united to the Body; must we not believe the Thing to be true, because we cannot exactly tell how it is so? Had the latter been as necessary to be known as the former, no Doubt but God would have reveal'd even this unto us. Is it rational to deny a Thing known, for the Sake of a Thing unknown? Or doth it not much more become us to hold fast what we know, and pray to God for farther Light in what we don't know, or rest satisfied in what God hath revealed to us? Shall we deny there are Stars, because we can't number them? So shall we for Fear of falling into a small Mistake as to the Manner of the Conveyance of this Defilement, deny there is such a Thing? So to do seems to cast dark Reflections not only on our Reason, but on our higher Powers of Soul. And I cannot but think, (with humble Submission) That if *Adam* had not sinned, none of his Posterity should have actually sinned; or if they had, that God would never have sent any of them to Hell for those Sins; tho' he might have shewn his Displeasure by some Temporal Chastisement. The Covenant being made with *Adam* as a publick Head for them, and not with them; so long as he kept and fulfill'd the Covenant, they could not break it. For look as it is between Christ the *Second Adam* and his Confederates: Some of them are prevented from committing any actual Sin, I mean Elect Infants that die in Infancy; others that do actually sin are yet as firmly secured from Hell as if they had never

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finned, their Sins being no Breach of that Covenant made for them between the Father and Son: They are a Breach of God's Law, and so expose them to temporal Chastisements, but no Breach of that Covenant made for them; and so long as Christ their Covenant-Head fully performs the Conditions of that Covenant on his Side, the Law has nothing to do to execute its Curses on them; Christ having been made a Curse for them, *Gal. iii. 13.* All this is clear from *Pf. lxxxix. 27, to 36.* *Also I will make him my First-Born, Higher than the Kings of the Earth. My Mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my Covenant shall stand fast with him. His Seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his Throne as the Days of Heaven. If his Children forsake my Law, and walk not in my Judgments; if they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments: Then will I visit their Transgression with the Rod, and their Iniquity with Stripes. Nevertheless, my Loving-Kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my Faithfulness to fail. My Covenant will I not break, nor alter the Thing that is gon out of my Lips. Once have I sworn by my Holiness, that I will not lie unto David.* David is there a Type of Christ, and by his Children we may understand the Children of Christ; and observe, their breaking God's Law did not break his Covenant, nor expose them to Hell, tho' their Iniquities were visited with the Rod. Says God, *ver. 34 & 36, My Covenant will I not break, i.e. with Christ, as ver. 28. nor alter the Thing that is gon out of my Lips. His Seed shall endure for Ever.* You see here, his keeping the Covenant secured his Seed from Eternal Punishment, tho' they might break the Law. The only Difficulty that seems to lie in the Way is this, That the Punishment due to Adam's Posterity for his Sin, seems greater than their Happiness had been by him had he never sinned. But consider, had Adam stood, his Happiness would have been as endless as the Torments of Hell: And as we cannot tell what the Misery of the Damned is, so neither can we tell what the Comforts were of a sinless State, and to be made after God's own Image. But suppose the Misery of the former greater than the Happiness of the latter, yet since we are not sure that ever God sent any to Hell

Hell merely for *Adam's* Sin, it may give Satisfaction : Seeing the Question then is not, Whether the Punishment inflicted on the Damned is more to be dreaded, than the Happiness of *Adam* before he sinned was to be desired ? But, Whether our Desert of that Punishment has more in it of Evil, than his sinless State had of Good ? Now it seems evident there was more of Good in the former, than Evil in the latter ; seeing the Punishment itself was not without something of Good in it, as it was a just Reward of what was Evil : But *Adam* had no Mixture of Evil with that Good he enjoy'd before he fell.

2dly, I come to shew, that God may justly send Infants to Hell : I do not say that God doth so, but that he would be Just and Righteous if he should do so. And I think if what I have said under the former Head is believed, this cannot rationally be denied. Yet who can be sure but some of the *Learned Wits* of our Age may raise some philosophical Quibbles against what has been spoken, or what may be spoken, as the Heathen Philosophers of old did against the Gospel ? But I hope such as reject what hath been spoken, will set these Things in a clearer Light ; and not reject both Human and Divine Testimony, without giving some Reason for what they do. Mean-time I proceed to shew there is no Appearance of Injustice, to give the Wages due to the Work : Nay, it would carry in it a greater Shew of Injustice not to punish them, seeing it belongs as much to Justice to punish an Offender, as to acquit an innocent Person. God's punishing Infants with a corporal Death, as much reflects on his Justice as his punishing them with eternal Death : If they deserve the former, they also certainly deserve the latter ; they being both comprehended under that first Commination, *In the Day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*. But if they don't deserve the latter, they can't deserve the former : For tho' a Person may deserve a lesser Punishment, who doth not deserve a greater ; yet a Person that is innocent no more deserves the former, than he does the latter.

Obj. Can it be consistent with Righteousness in God to punish such, and with so severe a Punishment too, for the Fault of another, tho' they had no Hand in the committing it ?

Ans. I remember when a Question was put to our Lord by the High Priest, *By what Authority dost thou these Things?* Matt. xxi. 23. He answered, ver. 24. *I also will ask you one Thing, which if ye tell me, I in likewise will tell you, &c.* So I will ask the Objector one Thing, and when that is answer'd, I also (if Need be) will answer. The Question is, How was it consistent with the Justice of God to substitute his Son, his dearly beloved Son, who never offended him, in the Room of Sinners; that he should die, and undergo the Curse of the Law, and answer the Demands of Justice; that he should do this alone, and have none to help him? *Isa.* lxiii. 5. Yea, tho' Man had no Hand in setting up Christ as a publick Person, and yet that the Benefits procured by his Undertaking should redound to his spiritual Seed, to all Intents and Purposes as if they had done the same: That they should come in Joint-Heirs with him, and at last be glorified together with him, and yet have no Hand with him in his Work? And yet God is said to be just in so doing, *Rom.* iii. 26. I suppose when this is answer'd, it may prevent my Answer to the other; nor is this foreign to the Point in hand, but well adapted thereunto.

As *Adam* by Sin exposed himself and Posterity to Misery, so it would have been no Blemish to Justice had God punished both according to the Demerit of their Offence: Not in punishing *Adam*, since he had Power to have prevented his own Ruin by withstanding the Temptation; nor in punishing his Offspring, (suppose it so) for as they would have came in as Partners in his Felicity had he not sinn'd, so 'tis but reasonable they should share with him in his Misery if he did. To illustrate the Case thus, A certain noble Man is willing to give a considerable Summ of Money to some young Children; they being under Age, that it may be secured to them, he commits it to their own Father, as Trustee, who seems an honest and substantial Man, one that never was chargeable with the least Fault, and bids him trade with it for the Benefit of his Children: Soon after he has received it he proves extravagant, and waxes what is his own, and what he had committed to him for his Children; and reduces his whole Family to Poverty and Misery. Now
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tho' in such a Case all would blame the Father at the highest Degree, and pity his poor Children that suffer'd by his Means, yet no Man could justly blame him that trusted him with the Money. So in the Case in Hand, God entrusted our Happiness in *Adam's* Hand, who was our Father, and an honest, upright, and perfect Man; one that before had never wronged any Man; a Man in whose Hand our Privileges were as safe as they might have been had they been put into our own Hand: But he venturing too far to make himself better than he was, lost all, and ruin'd himself and his Family. But since neither Love to God, nor himself, nor his Posterity, could restrain him from that Act of Disobedience, but he prefers an Apple above God, and his own Soul, and his Posterity's Happiness, and that when he had no Need of it, the punishing him and his for so vile an Offence can no ways reflect on God, but is justly chargeable on himself.

Obj. But God foreknew *Adam's* Sin, but Men can't foreknow what others will do; if they did, they would not commit such Things to their Trust.

Ans. Tho' God foreknew *Adam's* Sin, he was not to Blame for not preventing it, seeing he had endu'd *Adam* with a Power to have prevented it himself; and to give to one that don't want, is counted no Charity. God's Foreknowledge did not necessitate *Adam* to sin: His voluntary Sin was rather the Cause of that Foreknowledge, than his Foreknowledge the Cause of that Sin; seeing he never would have foreknown it, if Man had not committed it. Nor was this any just Reason why God should not trust our Privileges in his Hand, seeing he took Occasion by his Fall to raise many of his Seed to a much happier State than they should have been in had he never sinned: And as for the rest, we must leave them to divine Sovereignty: For God may do what he will with his own; and has Power, out of the same Lump, to make one Vessel to Honour, and another to Dishonour.

3d and lastly, I answer, Tho' God may justly deal with them as aforesaid, yet there is some Ground to hope concerning them, for God doth not always punish as Sin has deserved: Yet such as are saved, are not saved as Innocents,

Innocents, as many suppose; but in a Way of Grace, thro' the Redeemer. *Quest.* But can there be any Hope of the Non-elect, for they are the Subjects in the Question? I answer, No; but our Hopes of Infants are, that all such as die in Infancy were elected, redeemed, and sanctified. To prevent all Mistakes as to what hath been said, I shall repeat the Question, and summ up the Answer. The Question was,

Quest. Seeing God hath appointed some to everlasting Punishment, as the just Reward of Sin, which Number can't be increased or diminished, What must we think of Non-elect Infants, that die in Infancy, that never committed any Sin to deserve that Punishment?

The Substance of the Answer is, Tho' Infants are obnoxious to eternal Punishment, as they are involv'd in the Guilt of *Adam's* first Sin, and partake of his corrupt depraved Nature, and that before they consent to any Temptation, (which Depravity is the Cause of yielding to Temptations, and not the yielding to Temptations the Cause of that Depravity) for which God may justly send them to Hell, yet there is some Ground to hope that all that die in Infancy may be saved; yet not as Innocents, but as being all elected, redeemed, and sanctified. Therefore in the Question I put in Non-elect Infants upon a Supposition some were so, which I can't deny, but would hope the contrary. And thus I have finished my Answer to the Question, and the sixth Part of my Proposition: And if any can give clearer Light into this Matter, I shall gladly be inform'd by them; but for any to put out this Light, and leave us in Darkness, is not fair dealing.

7th Part of the Proposition. This Punishment to be inflicted, was for Sin voluntarily to be committed; the Punishment to be inflicted being for Sin, it was necessary the Sin should be committed in order thereunto: Hence, 1 *Pet.* ii. 8. *And a Stone of stumbling, and a Rock of Offence, even to them that stumble at the Word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed.* God foreseeing what Man would do, determin'd not to hinder him; nor is Man's Guilt hereby extenuated, since this Decree did not compel him to sin: Hence 'tis said, *Acts* ii. 23. *Him, being deliver'd by the determinate Coun-*
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sel and Foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked Hands have crucified and slain. Mind, God's foreknowing their wicked Inclinations to slay Christ, determin'd to suffer them so to do: But this being owing to their Inclination, and not to his Determination, it is called *Wickedness*; which it could not have been, had they done it with a Design to execute his Counsel.

The Sin to be committed was never the less free and voluntary because foreknown: For tho' Man's Sin follow'd God's Foreknowledge by a Necessity of Infallibility, it being impossible for God to be mistaken, yet not by a Necessity of Co-action, or Compulsion: Whatever is done purely by Compulsion, can't be formally sinful, tho' it may be materially so. *Satan* tempted Christ to throw himself down from the Pinnacle of the Temple, and did not tumble him down by Violence, (tho', humanly speaking, it was easier to have thrown him down, than to carry him up) as not answering his End, had he had Power so to do: By the latter he might have suffer'd; by the former, being a voluntary Act, he had sinn'd, had he kill'd himself, and so render'd himself unfit for a Saviour. Thus the Devil tempted our first Parents to eat the forbidden Fruit, but used no Violence, knowing how much of their Sin, and his Ends in tempting them, depended on the Voluntariness of that Act. There is a great Difference between a Person drowning himself, and being drowned by another: In the former he acts freely, and so is guilty of Self-Murder; in the latter he is passive, and under no Guilt thereby. Suppose one by Violence to put a Sword into another Man's Hand, and so forces him to kill any one: He that is thus forced, doth an Act materially evil; but not formally so, because the Will did in no wise consent thereunto. The Guilt of that Murder lies at his Door that forced him, and not at his that was forced. Thus it was under the old Law, *Deuteronomy* xxii. 25, 26. *But if a Man find a betrothed Damsel in the Field, and the Man force her, and lie with her, then the Man only that lay with her shall die; but unto the Damsel thou shalt do nothing, there is in the Damsel no Sin worthy of Death.* And as he that is forced by Man to do what is materially evil, is by that

Force

Force exempted from the Guilt thereof; so much more must he be, that is compell'd thereunto by a divine Power: Suppose it so. Should we suppose God, by his Foreknowledge of Sin, to destroy the Freedom of the Will in such Actions, and to force the Person so to do; such a Force would not only destroy the Formality of the Evil of such Actions, but even the Materiality of the Evil of the same Actions: Since such a Force would note not only God's Approbation of the same, but an earnest Desire to have those Actions done. If God doth but command any Action to be done, it makes it no Sin, but a Duty to him that doth it; tho' to do the same Act without such a Command would have been Sin, seeing that Actions that are sinful to some, may not be so to others. Thus God commanded *Abraham* to slay *Isaac*, and this made it his Duty so to do; which would have been an aggravated Sin to have done without that Command. Thus God commanded the *Israelites* to borrow Jewels of Silver, and Jewels of Gold, which without that Command would have been little better than Theft, since they could not design to repay them. Thus putting one Man to Death may be a Sin, to put another Man to Death may be a Duty, the Act of taking away the Life is the same; but the former dying innocently, and the latter worthily, is a Circumstance that vastly alters the Nature of the Thing. So that either we must suppose that Evil that God did foreknow to be freely and voluntarily done, or else there could be no such Thing as an evil and sinful Act formally so, either done or foreknown. 'Tis true, God is said to determine the Death of his Son, *Acts* iv. 28. and yet those that put him to Death, are said to do it by wicked Hands, *Acts* ii. 23. and are in so doing call'd *Murderers*, *Chap.* vii. 52. But it is one Thing for God to determine to suffer a Thing to be done, another Thing to force or compel to the doing the same. God foresaw, and foretold how the *Jews*, in Hatred to Christ, would put him to Death, with all the Circumstances of his Death: He determin'd not to hinder them; but they therein no ways regarding his Determination, but acting in their own Spirits, are said to do it by wicked Hands. Had God determin'd to compel them to put Christ to Death, contrary

trary to their own Wills, I cannot see how their so doing was to them an Act either formally good or evil, because forced to it. Not formally good; for that requires not only a Command from God, but a Consent thereto, and Delight therein, in him that obeys that Command: Nor could it have been formally an evil Action, because by a divine Power compell'd thereunto.

Nor doth that additional Guilt that is charged upon such here, nor that additional Punishment that will be executed hereafter on such as sit under the clear Calls of the Word, and do not obey it, the least whisper of any Design in the Father to save such, or of the Son to redeem such of the Non-elect that were chargeable herewith; seeing God not only foreknew all the evil Actions for which he determin'd to punish, but also the Circumstances that would attend such Actions: And foreknowing that some that would enjoy the clear Calls of God would willfully disobey them, he did appoint a sorer, not a surer Punishment to them, than to such as never should enjoy such Means; as is clear from *Matthew* x. 21, 22. *Hebrews* x. 28, 29. *Luke* xii. 47, 48.

8th Part of the Proposition. God doth all these in a Way of Righteousness. If the former Parts of the Proposition are believed, I cannot see how this can with any Shew of Reason be deny'd. Scripture, and Reason, (which some prefer so much above it) both will clear the Righteousness of God herein: Not only prove him righteous, which none that own the Being of a God can deny, but prove him righteous in ordaining some to eternal Punishment. The Scripture loudly proclaims God to be righteous, *Psal.* cxlv. 17. *The Lord is righteous in all his Ways:* And if in all, then in this. When we have proved any Thing to be God's Way, or Work, it is scarce worth while to spend Time to prove him righteous in either; since he can be no other. 'Tis said, *Acts* xvii. 31. *Because he hath appointed a Day in the which he will judge the World in Righteousness:* Then God will clear the Equity of his Proceedings, as well in the Damnation of the Reprobates, as in the Salvation of his Chosen Ones; and yet the Judgment will pass according to what is written in the Book of his eternal Decrees. He is call'd *The*

righteous Judge, 2 Tim. iv. 8. See Rom. ii. 5. But after thy Hardness and impenitent Heart, treasurest up unto thyself Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God: Mind, this Wrath unto the Day of Wrath, was what they had treasured up unto themselves by their hard and impenitent Hearts; and in the Great Day God opens that Treasury which they with so much Pleasure have fill'd, and clears his Righteousness therein; according to Isa. iii. 11. *Woe unto the Wicked, it shall go ill with him, for the Reward of his Hands shall be given him:* God gives him but what he has work'd hard for. 'Tis very observable what we read Matt. xxv. in the latter Part of that Chapter you have a Representation of God's judicial Proceedings; and he tells the Righteous that Kingdom they were then to inherit, was *prepared for them before the Foundation of the World*; ver. 34. He also tells those on the Left-Hand, that their everlasting Fire was prepared also; ver. 41. And no doubt but both were of even Date. But lets both know, that tho' the Preparation of the former was not owing to their Works, yet they should never come there without good Works, and so shews what they had done, ver. 35, 36, 37. So the Execution of his Wrath was owing to the Wickedness of them to whom it was ordained, and so shews the Sins for which they were to suffer the Vengeance of eternal Burnings, ver. 41. 42. And concludes, ver. 46. *And these shall go away into everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life eternal:* And so shuts up the Transactions of that awful Day.

And what can Reason say against this? Where is the Man that dares reply against God? Is not all Justice founded on Reason? Would not Reason have much more to say against the Righteousness of God, in suffering such as live and die in Sin to go unpunish'd? Would not Reason say it was a righteous Thing to render Tribulation to such, by him that was to be the Judge of all the Earth? Might not Reason suggest that it look'd like Connivance at, if not an Approbation of the sinful Practice of such, to suffer them to go unpunish'd for it, who never turned from it, or mourned for it; and would this be for the Honour of

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of God's Righteousness? No surely. Is it not as much the Part of a righteous Judge to condemn the Guilty, as to acquit the Innocent? *Is God unrighteous who taketh Vengeance?* Rom. iii. 5. He seems to speak with Abhorrence; says God, Chap. xii. 19. *Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord*: Mind, it is mine, it belongs to me, as a righteous Judge. As if he had said, Sin is not so properly yours, as Vengeance is mine; it would be a just Reflection on me, not to take Vengeance on such as have at once lent a deaf Ear to my Mind revealed in my Law and Gospel. He'll surely be thought worthy of that fore Punishment that will be inflicted on him, who hath both despised *Moses's Law*, and even *trod under Foot the Son of God*, Heb. x. 29.

If any are so dim-sighted as not to see the real and great Difference between absolute Preterition and absolute Reprobation, but think the former as inconsistent with Justice and Righteousness as the latter, I shall illustrate the Matter thus. Some Beggars coming to my Door, I give to them; afterwards come some more, I refuse to give to them: Not that I saw any more in the former to move me to give to them, than I saw in the latter to move me not to give to them; the giving to the former, and not giving to the latter, are purely owing to my Pleasure: Nor will any Man in his Wits charge me with Injustice in not giving to the latter, as I did to the former; but should I not only refuse to give to some, but also hang them up without any Crime laid to their Charge, or legal Proceedings against them, all the World would say I was not only unjust, but guilty of the highest Inhumanity, and Barbarity. Thus in the Case in hand, my not giving to some, answers to absolute Preterition; my hanging the same without a Crime or legal Proceeding, answers to absolute Reprobation.

Nor doth the Destruction of the Non-elect more certainly ensue as a Consequence of our Scheme, than it doth follow from that which is opposite thereunto. By the former the Non-elect will certainly perish for their Sins, as not being interested in the distinguishing and special Grace of God in Election; which Grace would as effectually secure their Salvation, as it doth the Salvation of

such as he hath chosen, had God seen it good to extend it to them. They of the contrary Opinion dare not say that ever a non-elect Soul was saved, or even will be saved; only say that they may be saved, if they will: So that all these do as certainly perish for their not exerting that Power that they have, as being destitute of the special and efficacious Operation of the Spirit; which would as certainly have enabled them to obey the Commands of Christ, as it did any other, had he put forth the same Power on these as he did on them. So that some perish for Sin, as not being interested in electing Grace; the others perish for Sin, as not being interested in efficacious Grace: Both with equal Certainty perish, and both equally perish for Sin. Where then is the Difference? If there is any, it lies here; they of the former Opinion do suppose Souls perish for not doing what they had a Power to have done, as coming originally out of God's Hand; those of the latter Opinion do suppose God punishes for not doing such Things as never were done, and never will be done without such Help as they must own such are destitute of, and indeed without such Help as renders it possible for them to obey the Commands of God. Thus have I finish'd the Parts of the Proposition.

General II. Is to answer the Objections made against the Righteousness of God herein. If I have proved the Doctrine true, I have proved that God is righteous; for whatever he doth is righteous, and can be no otherwise: Yet knowing how natural it is for Men to quarrel at this Truth, and how many form frightful Notions of it, which they lay as Stumbling-Blocks to others, I shall wade yet deeper into this Mytery, by answering the bold Objections some may raise as Batteries against this Truth. I might answer all in the Words of the Apostle, *Rom. ix. 20.* *Nay but, O Man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the Thing formed say unto him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?* What Man, dark, blind, ignorant Man, to reply against the God that made him! *Job* tells what Respect Men had shewn to him in his Prosperity, *Job xxix. 21, 22.* *Unto me Men gave Ear, and waited, and kept Silence at my Counsel; after my Words,*

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Words, they spake not again: They took his Words as a Law, and shall not we shew as much Deference to God? We read when the *Seventh Seal* was open'd, and God was about to reveal some great Things, 'tis said, *There was Silence in Heaven*; *Rev. viii. 1.* to shew their Willingness to be inform'd. So deep are the Mysteries of the Gospel, that the Angels desire to look into them; *1 Peter i. 12.* But that which makes these Things seem the deeper, is our Negligence in not searching into them, in order to our knowing what may be known. Look, as in Things natural, some Things seem strange, and even Miracles to some, that can easily be accounted for by others, whose Study is employ'd that Way; as in Eclipses, &c. So in Things divine, some can *ex Animo* consent to, rejoice in, and bless God for, such divine Revelation of his Will, as others know little of, and perhaps even scoff at, saying, *What is Truth?* But Truth will stand, when all that oppose it will be ashamed. The best of Men may err; but God cannot deceive, or be deceived; *Rom. ii. 2.* *But we are sure that the Judgment of God is according to Truth.* We may safely receive what God declares to be a Truth, and can't safely do otherwise. We are bound to believe God, even in what makes against us, as much as in what makes for us: As much to believe his Threats, as his Promises. God looks upon himself as highly affronted, when his Veracity is but call'd in question: Says God, *Numb. xiv. 11.* — *How long will this People provoke me? And how long will it be e'er they believe me?* Many are ignorant of these Truths, and don't desire to be better inform'd: Oh! They wou'd not have Ministers meddle with these Things, and say to the Seers, *See not*; as if none knew more than they, or else desir'd to remain in Ignorance: Whereas the deeper the Mysteries are, the more Need to be instructed. What, is it a light Thing to know what will become of the far greatest Part of the World? Should we for Fear of offending our ignorant or carnal Hearers conceal these Things, God may justly blast all our Labours.

Now the Objections against God's punishing, or rather decreeing from Eternity so to do, with everlasting Punishment, either for the Sin of *Adam*, as imputed to
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his Posterity, or for their own Sins, are of two Sorts: First, such as are founded on Reason; and secondly, such as are founded on Scripture: And tho' it is not meet to hear Reason against divine Revelation, yet (since it is so idoliz'd by some) I shall hear what can be said, and endeavour to answer for God.

Obj. 1. Why did God make Man; especially since he knew he would sin, and so fall under the Lashes of divine Vengeance? Why did he not leave him in the empty Womb of Nothing; then he had not been capable of sinning here, or suffering hereafter? What, make Man, and then damn him! This is a hard Saying, Who can hear it? Is this consistent with Righteousness? What would the World think, should a Father put his own Child to Death, and that with his own Hand? God, as a Creator, stands as a common Father to Mankind, *Isaiah lxiv. 8. But now, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the Clay, thou art the Potter, we all are the Work of thy Hand.*

Ans. The Objection consists of two Parts; (1.) Against God's creating us, (2.) Against his punishing such as he has made: To each of which I shall answer, and clear God's Righteousness therein. And (1.) as to his creating us. The Schools have disputed which is most to be dreaded, Hell, or Annihilation; and affirm that the latter is, because a bad Condition is more desirable than to be Nothing: Now tho' I am not of their Mind, yet it must be granted that Nature abhors its Annihilation; nor need I take this Way to answer the Objection. Therefore to clear God in creating us, let us consider how he created us, or in what State and Condition, and then compare that with Nothing: And tho' I think the former may well be call'd in question, not doubting but the Damned had rather be Nothing than be what they are, yet I think all must own that the State God made Man in at first is much more desirable than Nothing. To clear this, let us consider what an excellent Creature Man was when first created, *Gen. i. 27. So God created Man after his own Image, in the Image of God created he him: So Ps. viii. 5, 6. For thou hast made him a little lower than the Angels, and hast crowned him with Glory and Honour;*

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thou madest him to have Dominion over the Works of thy Hands, thou hast put all Things under his Feet. God made Man last, that so he might find the World as a House ready-furnish'd; he placed him in a delectable Eden, with all manner of Fruit ripe, and pleasant Rivers running thro' the Garden; he endu'd him with a rational Soul, capable of serving and enjoying God, when he might have made him a Toad: So high was he, that he thought if he was advanc'd higher, he expected to be as God. So that here was Nothing look'd like Unkindness, much less Unrighteousness: Nay, here was the highest Kindness. Hence we are call'd to praise God for creating us, *Psal. c. 3, 4, 5.* And now is not this better than Nothing? Who in such a State would once wish to be annihilated? 'Tis true, Man soon lost that Happiness; but this was owing to the Devil, and himself; not to God, any other than as a just God punishing him for his Sin: He first sinn'd, before God drove out the Man. Hence 'tis said, *Eccles. vii. 29. God made Man upright, but he sought out many Inventions:* You see how Man's Sin and Ruin is charg'd on himself, as not making Use of that Power God had endu'd him with; which, if he had, a far greater Temptation could not have prevailed over him.

As to the second Part of the Objection, that God damns some that he has made, this is a Truth that all must own that believe the Bible, notwithstanding the Relation they stand in to God as Creatures: But I have spoken to this before, and shall not now enlarge; only make some Remarks on the Relation God stands in to such as he hath created. Had Man continu'd in the State in which he was created, he had escap'd that Misery he was expos'd to; and had been for ever happy, he, and all his: But having sinn'd, he could expect nothing but Misery. As a Father will disinheret a wicked Child, so no Wonder if God stripp'd Adam of all.

But some may say, if that had been all, it would not have look'd so severe; but to be turned out of Paradise, and be liable to Hell, that seems hard: But 'tis no more than he knew of, and had deserved. We read under the Law, that if a Son should entice to serve other Gods, the

Father

Father was to kill him, *Deut. xiii. 6, 9.* no Wonder then if when *Adam* regarded the Devil more than God, that God should inflict the Punishment: If he did not inflict it in the Rigour of it, it was to shew the exceeding Riches of his Grace; nor can any Thing else prevent it to his Posterity.

Obj. 2. Since Man's Ruin comes by Sin, if God would make Man, why did not God restrain him from it, and so prevent his Destruction, and especially since he knew he would sin if he did not?

Ans. He that duly considers what God did to prevent the first Sin, will have no just Cause to find fault that he did no more. This Tree, of which God commanded *Adam* not to eat, was fenced with such a dreadful Commination, as one would have thought no rational Creature should ever have broke thro'; says God, *Gen. ii. 17.* *For in the Day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* Mind, in the very Day thou eatest, &c. here was but a short Time between the Sin and Punishment: He adds, surely die, as soon as thou eatest, and as sure as thou eatest; and the Punishment was Death. *Adam*, thou shalt die, or in dying thou shalt die, be always dying, or thou shalt die corporally, spiritually, and eternally. Now one would have thought this was eno' to have prevented his Sin, seeing he had Power to keep himself from it; but if *Adam* was so set upon the Ruin of himself and Posterity that Nothing but Violence should restrain him, it was just for God to say, *Adam*, take thy Way, thou seest what the End will be. God might not restrain *Adam* from sinning, since he had a Design to take Occasion thereby to display his Grace in restoring and advancing of some of *Adam's* fallen Race by Christ; which Grace shines brighter in their Recovery, than it would have done in preventing Sin. The Blessedness such receive by the second *Adam* being far greater than that which they lost by the first. Nor is the Righteousness of God in the least eclipsed, by not preventing Sin, with respect to those that perish, which I shall clear by a Similitude. A King signs a Law to punish such and such evil Deeds with the utmost Severity, and causes it to be publish'd in all his Dominions; tho' he doth not tie their Hands, yet his requiring

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quiring no more than they could do clears his Justice, tho' some die by that Means. But suppose, to prevent any from breaking such a Law, the King should seize on all that he suspected as any ways inclined to break that Law, or but capable so to do, and should confine them in Chains all their Days, to prevent them from doing it; Would not such a Confinement be thought more unrighteous than the making, yea, or executing the Law on such as had violated it? Sure it would. He that breaks that Law has nothing to say to justify himself, nor can he accuse the King of Injustice; but he that was under Confinement might have much to say for himself, and against the King, and the Judge that confin'd him: For himself he might plead, that the publishing such a Law, was eno' to deter him from the Fact; against the Judge he might plead, that to confine an innocent Person, was contrary to all Rules of Justice.

To apply this to the present Case, God makes a Law, publishes it to *Adam*, and tells him he shall die if he transgresses it; Man was no ways compell'd to break it, yet did it: Now was God to blame, or Man? I have already clear'd the Righteousness of God in charging the Guilt of *Adam's* Sin on his Posterity; it is eno' to my present Purpose to clear God in punishing *Adam*, and in not hindering, or preventing his Ruin. To illustrate this farther, Suppose two Men, both in their Senses, going over a Bridge, under which is a deep River; one says to the other he will leap in, unless he holds him: He doth so, and is drown'd. Now which was to blame: He that knew his Danger, and leap'd in, when there was a safe Bridge to go over; or he that did not by Violence prevent him? Nor will this fully reach the Case, for one Man is bound to help another; but God is bound to no Man: What could God have done more to prevent Man's Sin and Punishment, unless by an irresistible Power to restrain him, when he could have prevented it himself without it? Says God, *Isa. iii. 9. Woe unto their Soul, for they have rewarded Evil unto themselves; so Jer. iv. 18. Thy Way and thy Doings have procur'd these Things unto thee, this is thy Wickedness: Tho' Adam* blamed *Eve*, yet he did not blame God for not preventing

venting him from sinning, well knowing he had Power of himself to have withstood a far greater Temptation.

Obj. 3. Why doth not God work Faith in all, in order to their Recovery?

Ans. As Man hath by Sin disabled himself to believe; so God is not bound to enable him, nor unjust in requiring him so to do. If a Servant willfully disables himself to do his Master's Work, his Master may justly withhold his Wages. If a Man wounds himself, Who is to blame, he that gave himself the Wound, or he that don't heal him; especially if he has no Desire to be healed, but had rather die of his Wound? I think the Answer is easie to be given. When *Adam* had sinn'd, in violating the Law of God; instead of running to God, to beg Pardon, and Strength, he runs from God, and hides himself. Faith is God's Gift, and where he gives it, such have Cause to be thankful; but where he denies it, he doth no Wrong to such. If Man of himself has Power to believe, (as some pretend to, and especially such as oppose this Doctrine) then let him not blame God, but himself, if he doth not; not blame God for not giving more Strength, but himself for not exerting that Power he pretends to have. If he hath not Power to believe, 'tis because he hath by Sin lost it, and therefore God is not unrighteous in not repairing that Strength he lost in rebelling against himself. When *Sampson*, after all the Warnings he had of his Wife's Treachery, would again lay down his Head in her Lap, to cut off his Locks where his great Strength lay, it was just with God to take away that Strength he had given him, that he should become like other Men; yea, that he should fall as a Prey into the Hands of his Enemies, as a Reward of his Folly. So if *Adam*, (for by him came our Sin and Misery) after all the Warning given him, would for the Sake of an Apple (suppose it so) give *Satan* an Advantage over him, who could no more conquer him by Violence, than the *Philistines* could *Sampson* before his Locks were cut; 'tis just with God not only to deny to give him new Strength, but to leave him in the Hand of his Enemy *Satan*, to whom he had consented, and obey'd rather than God, as a just Punishment for his willful Loss of that Strength

Strength he once had. Man is charged not only as unable to believe, but as unwilling; *John v. 40. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have Life:* They would die rather than come to, or believe in Christ for Life. So that this is a willful Inability: They are not only unwilling to come of themselves, but unwilling that God should enable them, and make them willing: They don't like to be saved that Way. Hence they are represented as afraid that God should work Grace in them, *Matt. xiii. 15. Their Eyes have they closed, lest at any Time they should see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and should understand with their Hearts, and be converted, and I should heal them:* Mind, they close their own Eyes to keep out all Light, lest they should be converted. How prone are Men to do all they can to stifle Convictions, when God begins to work in them! Whereby they shew that they prefer their present State more than a better; and that, if they had the same Power they have lost, they would make no better Use of it than they did before: But if these Convictions still follow them, yet, instead of going to Christ by Faith to heal that Wound, they will try all Ways to heal it themselves, rather than be beholden to Christ. They are like those *Hos. v. 13. When Ephraim saw his Sickness, and Judah saw his Wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to King Jareb.* So an awaken'd Soul tries all Ways before it will go by Faith to Christ. Such will run to their Duties, and Reformations for Comfort; or any Thing, rather than to Christ: As it was with her that spent all on Physicians; but being worse rather than better, was forced to come to Christ, but that was the last Help. So when we are made to see that Christ or Hell must be our Portion, then, and not till then, we shall believe. The working of Faith is attributed to the exceeding Greatness of God's Power, and 'tis Man's Unwillingness to believe that makes it so: If Man was but willing, the Work would be easily done; but the great Work is to make Man willing, *Psal. cx. 3. Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power.* And can God be hard thought of because he don't work Faith in all; when Man not only has sinn'd away the Power he had to obey

him in this or any Thing else, but is utterly unwilling that God should work it? So that nothing short of Fear of dropping into Hell will make him willing? The Father's dealing with that vile Prodigal that had spent all in riotous Living, shew'd his Love; but had he denied him what he bestow'd, none could justly have charg'd him with Unkindness, much less Unrighteousness: And especially had he never returned to him, to intreat those Favours of him. Where then is the Unrighteousness of God in not giving what Man willfully sinn'd away, and never sincerely desired by Grace to be restor'd? God will clear his Righteousness one Day, and stop the Mouths of such Gainsayers; nor will God only silence such at Judgment, but also if ever he comes to work Faith in the Souls of such here, for those Objections against God, and his Truths. True Grace will take down those swelling Thoughts of our own Strength to do for ourselves, or of our Worthiness that God should do that for us which we cannot do.

Obj. 4. How can God in Righteousness punish Man for not doing what he hath no Power to do, and what God decreed to permit him to do?

Ans. The Objection consists of two Parts; first, How can God in Righteousness condemn Man for that which he cannot do? What I have spoken may serve for an Answer, yet I shall further answer. Had God commanded any Thing morally impossible, as to fly up to the Clouds, or to speak without a Tongue, and punish'd him for not doing that which Nature had not render'd him capable of doing, this Objection might have some Weight in it; but it is not so: God commands no more of Man than was possible for him to do when first created; yea, no more than he might have done with Ease, Pleasure, and Delight. And secondly, As to Man's being punish'd for doing that which God decreed to permit; I answer, 'Tis one Thing for Evil to be done by divine Permission, another to be done by divine Approbation. God's Decree to suffer Sin to enter into the World, don't make it less sinful; because God would not have decreed it, had he not seen that Man would commit it. Nor is the Evil thus permitted the less hateful to God; for he

he did not decree to permit it because he approv'd of it, but because Man would commit it, and he himself design'd to bring so much Good to many by it. The *Jews*, in crucifying Christ, are said to do what God in his Counsel had determin'd to be done, *Acts* iv. 48. yet they did it by wicked Hands, as *Acts* ii. 23. For tho' God in his infinite Wisdom and Grace design'd to bring Good out of that Evil, yet those bloody Murderers had no Regard thereunto. Thus it is said of the *Assyrian*, that he was the Rod of God's Anger; but says God, *Howbeit, he meaneth not so, neither doth his Heart think so, but it is in his Heart to destroy*, *Isa.* x. 5, 7.

Obj. 5. If God will punish, and that for Sin, Why doth he not punish all, since all have sinned, and especially such as have been the greatest Sinners? Whereas we oft see the contrary: A persecuting blaspheming *Saul* is chosen; and a strict *Pharisee*, that could say, *God, I thank thee I am not as other Men*, is rejected; and the Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven before such.

Ans. Was it always thus, it would be no Unrighteousness in God; but it is but seldom such Instances of Grace can be produced: God will have Mercy on whom he will have Mercy. 'Tis objected why doth not God punish all? But, if it can be supposed unrighteous in God to punish some, it must be supposed greater Unrighteousness to punish all. And whereas 'tis objected against God's saving great Sinners, and condemning lesser: Tho' this is no sure Rule to judge by, yet, if it was always as it is sometime, it need not seem strange, if we consider the great Ends of God's Decrees in saving some, and punishing others; which was to glorifie his Grace in the former, and his Justice in the latter: And these Methods are well adapted to those great Ends. (1.) His chusing any to Salvation, was for the Glory of his rich and free Grace, *Eph.* i. 4, 5, 6. and as this was one End, so his chusing and saving such as he foresaw would be great Sinners answers it. Had God chosen none but the least of Sinners, his Grace would not have appeared as in chusing greater Sinners; such as *Saul*, *Mary Magdalen*, &c. This might prove an Occasion of thinking that he saw
Something

Something more in them than others to deserve it; but to chuse some of the chief of Sinners, cuts off all Suspicion of any Thing in them moving God thereunto. And whereas we see God sometime not only passes by, but punishes lesser Sinners; this as much glorifies his Justice, as the other doth his Grace: For should God only punish such as are the greatest of Sinners, it might prove an Occasion of emboldening lesser Sinners to go on in Sin, with Hopes of Impunity, and to think such Sins did not deserve such Punishment; but when, pursuant to God's eternal Decree, Justice serves an Arrest on lesser Sinners, yea on such as seem to have escaped the Pollution of the World, and that appeared righteous before Men, and saying to such, *How can ye escape the Damnation of Hell?* as *Matt. xxiii. 28, 33.* This shews at once the great Evil there is in the least Sin, and the Justice of God in punishing it with so severe a Punishment.

I come now to consider what may be objected, against the Doctrine I am upon, from Scripture; and here 'tis not so much objected against God's Righteousness, as against the Doctrine itself: And now the Adversary seems to insult, as if all was his own, the Cause of Salvation not excepted. And since what is fetch'd from Scripture is of far greater Force with me than what is only founded on Topicks of Reason, I shall impartially weigh what can be said from thence, and shall not conceal any Scripture that seems but to look in Favour of the contrary Opinion. The Scripture is so full to prove the Doctrine of God's eternal Decrees, touching the Happiness or Misery of particular Persons, that we may as well deny such a Thing as Reward or Punishment, as question God's Decree with Reference thereunto. But before I name any Scripture tending this Way, let me say, it doth not seem a safe Way to set the Parts of Scripture at Variance, which so sweetly harmonize when rightly understood; or to bring Scriptures less known to confute, or but explain such as are more known. Could the Doctrine before us be fairly confuted from Scripture, it might make us not only question what is confuted, but even the Truth of that Part by which the other is confuted, and even lower our Esteem of the Whole: But, blessed be God, the Parts of
Scripture

Scripture that seem to differ, may easily be reconcil'd. But the Apostle tells us, *2 Pet. iii. 16. As also in all Epistles, speaking in them of these Things, in which are some Things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own Destruction;* mind, they wrest not only such Scriptures as are hard and difficult, but the others that are more easie. Now to wrest Scripture, is not only thro' Mistake to put a wrong Sense on it, but a willful perverting of it to serve a Turn; such as the Apostle says *corrupt the Word of God, 2 Cor. ii. 17.* The Greek Word *καπηλευοντες* may be read, *Huckstering*, as those that sell Fruit mix good and bad; or as Vintners, who mingle their Wines for their own Profit, and so cheat the Buyers. Such Liberty do some take with Scripture. But who were those that thus wrested the Scripture to their own Destruction? He tells us the Ignorant and Unstable; such as the Apostle tells us are *ever learning, and never able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth: 2 Tim. iii. 7.* By Ignorant we are not to understand such as want human Learning, the Idol of our Age, and that great Part of the World worship; but such as are ignorant for want of being taught of God: For 'tis said, *Job xxxvi. 22. Who teacheth like him?* If God doth not give an Understanding, the most learned Men are unmete Judges of divine Mysteries. The Apostles in their Days were deem'd ignorant and unlearned Men; but having been with Jesus, and taught by him, those that expos'd them, could not confute them: 'Tis said, *Acts vi. 9, 10. And there arose certain of the Synagogue, which is called the Synagogue of the Libertines, &c. and they were not able to resist the Wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake.* They were forced to go to Club-Law with him, before they could silence him. Such as have human Learning only, are often the greatest Dunces in Divinity; nor do any more wrest the Scripture than the learned Dons of our Age, many of which understand about as much of God's Decrees as *Nicodemus* did of the New Birth, who said, *How can these Things be?* 'Tis not eno' to be a Master in *Israel*, no, nor a Master of Arts, to know this. 'Tis Pity to see so excellent a Thing

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as human Learning is, when made Use of to right Ends, only made a Drudge to study to find out Ways and Means to obscure the Truth, as it is in Jesus. The Apostle calls the Counsel of God before the World, *A Mystery*, and such hidden Wisdom that none of the Princes of this World knew; 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8. and comes to shew how the right Knowledge of them may be obtained, *ver. 10. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit*: Spiritual Men are the best Judges of spiritual Things. I come under these Views to consider some Scriptures.

The first Scripture I shall name that is prest into this Service is, 2 Pet. iii. 9. *Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance*: How is this consistent with God's Decree that so many should perish?

I answer, Tho' the Word *Perish* is often used in Scripture in a milder Sense than Hell, yet having no Occasion to fly to that as a Shelter from the Force of this Text, I will grant that to be the Meaning here. But how must we understand those Words *not willing*; what, that none are sent to Hell? No, such a Sense will (I presume) no more agree with the Opinion of the Objector than with mine: For who is there but will own that there are some that for some Cause will so perish? We may as well question if ever any Person died in Sin; or, indeed, whether there is a Hell. What then, that God sends Souls to Hell against his Will? That's worse still: For who can compel him to do it? 'Tis said, *Rev. i. 18. And have the Keys of Hell and Death*. If you see a Malefactor going to Execution, you conclude he is condemn'd by the Judge; so if you hear of any sent to Hell, 'tis because God has condemn'd him to that Torment. And if neither of these Senses will do, What must the true Sense be? I confess, their Interpretation had need be warily understood who think to clear this by distinguishing between God's secret and revealed Will; lest we make God to say one Thing, and mean another. For tho' we read that God threatned to destroy Nineveh, and did it not, *Jon. iii. 10.* reserving the Condition of their Repentance secret in himself, yet here is no Room for such a Condition here; for then we must suppose God to say thus, I am not willing that any should

should perish, except they repent. Sure such a Sense will do the Objector no Good, nor this Truth any Harm; For who ever supposed that God decreed any to Hell but for Sin? If we understand the Words with Reference only to the Elect, that he is not willing that any of them perish, but that all of them should come to Repentance, it is a sound Sense. But that which I take to be the proper Sense is this; that when 'tis said *not willing that any should perish*, 'tis to shew that God doth not send any to Hell merely to gratifie his own Will, in a Sense abstracted from any Thing in them that perish justly moving him thereunto. As a Judge condemns a Malefactor to die; yet not to gratifie his Will only, but because he has deserved it, and as a just Judge he is obliged to it, and often weeps while he denounces the Sentence of Death. A parallel Text, *Lam. iii. 33. He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men:* And yet we see he doth afflict and grieve them: But the Meaning is, that 'tis not without respect to something in them as the Cause. As a Father corrects his Child, when his Heart akes in the mean-time. So when 'tis said God is not willing that any should perish, and yet by the Consent of all many do perish by his Will, I cannot think of any more agreeable Sense than I have put upon the Words, which is so far from weakening the Truth it is levell'd at, that it much rather confirms it; namely, that God decreed to punish for Sin; for the Decrees and the Execution of those Decrees differ not as to the Cause. If any have carried Things so far as to affirm that God did absolutely ordain any to Destruction, without Respect to Sin as the Cause; let them answer this Text, and put a more agreeable Sense upon it.

Another Scripture urged to the same End is, *Ezekiel xxxiii. 11. Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord, I have no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked, &c.* And how is this consistent with a Decree to punish any, when in so solemn a Manner he declares he has no Pleasure in Man's Death?

Ans. This equally strikes at God's punishing any in Time, as at his decreeing to punish them before Time; for if God under no Consideration is pleased with the

Death of any, Why doth he execute it upon them? But if for any Reason he may actually send them to Hell, and yet be righteous; for the same Reason he might decree so to do: For whatsoever is lawful to be done, is lawful to be determin'd to be done. But what I said to the former Objection, may serve as an Answer to this. As I shew'd a Judge condemns a Criminal with Tears, whom he could save was it not contrary to Law: His passing Sentence on him shews, that for the Honour of that Law he hath violated he is willing he should die; his doing it with Tears shews, he has no Pleasure in his Death simply consider'd. Thus God declares he desires not the Death of a Sinner, *i. e.* was it not for his Wickedness; which sweetly agrees to the Truth I am vindicating.

One would think it impossible for any endued with Reason, to urge this Text against the Doctrine here laid down: It seems much more to prove, that he doth not put any actually to Death in Time, than that he did not decree so to do before Time; the latter being milder than the former. Let me ask the Objector, Dost thou think God will send any to Hell? If he doth, How is it consistent with this Text, *I have no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked? &c.* If it is answer'd, He had never died but for his Wickedness; so say I, He had never been pre-ordain'd to Hell but for his Wickedness. So that tho' some seem to glory in this Text as utterly inconsistent with the Doctrine of Reprobation, it doth no Harm to that Cause, or the Objector any Good: And whensoever they can reconcile that, or such like Texts, with God's actual punishing any for Sin, they reconcile the same to God's Pre-ordination to Punishment.

But if this Sense will not satisfy the Objector, let us try if the contrary Opinion will help out the Matter at a dead Lift. And here I will suppose, that they never once thought that God did absolutely will the Salvation of all and every individual Person; for if so, What hinders them from being saved? But, if I mistake not, their Scheme runs thus: God, say they, suffered Man to fall into Sin and Misery; but being thus fallen, he heartily desires the Salvation of All, and each individual Person, upon Condition they will repent, believe, and sincerely

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obey him. And thus they think they have wounded the Doctrine I am upon incurably, and clear'd the Righteousness of God to the last Degree: A miserable Mistake. And sure Nothing can make Men so fond of this Opinion, but because it is their Own. They represent God assuring all Mankind of his equal Goodwill to every individual Soul, upon Terms which are impossible for any one of them to perform without his mighty Power enabling them, and yet mean-time will not put forth his Finger to save the greatest Part of them, sink or swim. If he bears equal Goodwill to all, Why does he not equally assist all in what is so necessary to be done in order for their Salvation? Sure I am, the Opinion they condemn, and I maintain, is clogg'd with no such hateful Reflections on God.

The last Scripture I shall name is, *Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.* Say some, here is an indefinite Promise to all that believe, and an indefinite Threat against such as believe not: Sure if God design'd to damn some, he would have limited the Promise. To that I answer, All that can be gather'd fairly from hence is, that no Soul in Christ shall perish, and no Soul out of Christ can be saved. But suppose a Non-elect Person should believe, Would he not be saved according to this Promise? *Ans.* If it can be thought possible such should believe, and make use of that Power they have lost, and act contrary to the certain Foreknowledge of God, then there would be some Room for such a Question; but till then, they are but vain Words. Suppose I put another Question thus; If a Non-elect Soul that can't get into Heaven by the Door should climb up some other Way, and tumble in over the Wall, shall he be suffered to continue there, or would God turn him out again? Is it worth while to puzzle our Brains to answer this profound Question? If I must answer, I am apt to think he would stay there: For it is said of those Heavenly Inhabitants, *they shall go no more out*: But here would be the Difficulty, how to get in. And yet all these are as possible, and likely to come to pass, as for a Non-elect Soul to believe: For says Christ, *John x. 26. But ye believe not; because ye are not of my Sheep, as I said unto ye.* Believing,

believing, and Not Believing, are Things not left at such Uncertainties as some think. For tho' no Decree of God doth force any to continue in Unbelief, yet as God knew his own Mind to whom he would give Faith, so he knew the rest would voluntarily continue in Unbelief. Men may come in with their impertinent If's, but there is Nothing uncertain to him that calls Things that are not as if they were. God's denying his Spirit that alone can work Faith, renders Unbelief as certain, as his giving his Spirit to renew us renders Faith certain. If the Sun was never to rise more, which is the Fountain of all Natural Light, Darkness in the Air, and Barrenness on the Earth, would be the certain Consequence: Yet God would be righteous if it was so; not only because the Sun is his, but because we are unworthy of its sweet Influences. So as to the present Case; God's Grace is as much at God's free Disposal as his Sun: And as if God seals up the Sun, no Man has Power to make it shine; so if he doth not work Faith, no other can. And tho' he will have his Ministers exhort all to believe where they preach, that by that Means God may work Faith in his Elect which lie scatter'd about the World, yet it doth not follow that all may believe. God knows who his Elect are, tho' we don't; and they shall obtain Faith, tho' the rest are blinded.

Quest. Are Reprobates bound to believe? If they are commanded to believe, and have no Saviour to believe in, How is it consistent with Justice to damn such for their Unbelief? *Ans.* I know no Scripture, where Reprobates as such are commanded to believe. 'Tis true, Ministers not knowing the Elect from the Reprobate, are to preach the Gospel to every Creature, and leave it to God to apply the Word, and make it effectual to the Salvation of such as he hath chosen, who knows who are his. Nor is their Sin the less in not obeying, because Reprobates; since their wilful Disobedience was the only Cause of their Reprobation: Their not Believing is as much their Sin, as any other Act of their Disobedience; tho' they have no Saviour to believe in, as Dying for them. For the Question is not, whether they have a Saviour to believe in; but whether there is not a Law that they ought to obey, and do sin in not obeying. To talk of believing in

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Christ as dying for them, when he never design'd it, is Talk indeed; and founded on a grand Mistake, either as to the true Nature or Object of Justifying Faith. The Work of Faith as justifying, is not first to believe that Christ died for me; for then such as cannot come up to this Persuasion, can't be justified nor saved; which is contrary both to Scripture, and the Experience of the Godly, there being many sincere Souls that can't get above their Doubts and Fears. To make Faith consist in believing that Christ died for me, is to make a Proposition the Object of my Faith, and perhaps a false one too. 'Tis the Work of Faith in its first Act, not to believe we are justified; but to rest on the free Promise of God, through the alone Merit of Christ, that we may be so: Not to believe that Christ died for me, but to depend on him as one that died for Sinners, in Hope that I may be one of those Sinners that he died for. To believe that Christ died for me, is rather Assurance than Faith; which differ so much, that he that hath the latter may never have (and as some say never can have) the former, while in this World. And as this sincere Dependance on Christ for Salvation is true Faith, and not a Believing that Christ died for me; so when a Reprobate doth thus depend on Christ, and embrace him in all his Offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, no Doubt but he will share in the Blessedness of Believers, as surely as a Saint in Glory shall be sent down to Hell when he desires to stay in Heaven no longer, or is forced from thence. I come now to speak briefly to.

General III. Wherein I shall shew, how the contrary Opinion no less reflects on the Righteousness of God. To clear this, I shall fairly state the Case, and then examine it. Say some, God hath not determin'd the State of any particular Person from Eternity, but hath left all upon Trial; so that he that lives best, shall be most happy: God determin'd not the Destruction of any Man by Name, only resolved to punish such as lived and died in Sin in an unconverted State: And when they have ended their Days, and God certainly knows how they have lived, then he appoints them a Reward suitable to their Works. I

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confess there are others who seem to come nearer the Truth, who tho' they cannot fall in with me, yet can't fall in with the former, but have found out a Medium : They own God hath chosen some from all Eternity, whom he will save, and in whom he will by his effectual Grace work those Things in them that in his Word he requires of them as necessary to Salvation, as Faith, Repentance, and new Obedience : But as for the rest, they are not so given over but they may be saved if they will. And thus both these Parties think they have fully clear'd the Righteousness of God, whatever becomes of Man. I shall answer to both. As to the former, in some Things we both agree that the Sin of Man is the only Cause of his perishing ; but in this we differ, Say we, or rather the Word of God, that God determin'd to punish for Sin before it was committed ; not that the Punishment was before the Sin was committed, but his Determination to punish was before, and that on the certain Foreknowledge that it would be committed ; as Laws are always made, before they are or can be executed. They affirm God ordain'd no Man's Destruction till in Time, when he saw they would deserve it. But sure I am, the Sovereignty of God appears even in this Scheme as well as in ours : For if it is ask'd, Why did not God decree to give Grace to one as well as to another ? I retaliate, Why doth not God give Grace in Time to one as well as to another ? Why was *Saul* singled out from his wicked Companions, who were all going to persecute the Saints ? Sure, if his decreeing not to give Grace to some is inconsistent with Righteousness, his not giving it in Time without such a Decree (supposing it so) can no less reflect on his Righteousness. If it be answer'd, Those to whom God denies to give his Grace did not do as they might have done, and God foreknew this, yet 'tis probable some of these might do as much as *Saul*, or *Zaccheus*, or the Jailor, or the Thief on the Cross. And why did he not conquer others as well as them, but to shew his Sovereignty ? Nor will they that deny God's Decrees say that he saves all without such a Decree, any more than we. And if Souls must perish for Sin, whether it is by antecedent or subsequent Determination, it differs not either as to the Misery of the Person suffering, or as

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to the Righteousness of him that inflicts the Punishment. Nay, those that deny such Decrees under a Pretence of making way for the greater Displays of Grace, are forc'd to say 'tis possible not one Soul may be saved. And such as own Election and think others may be saved, yet dare not say any one of them ever will believe, or can be saved, or at least actually were so. Sure then if God can be righteous in Damning a whole World for Sin committed, he may be righteous in determining to damn a Part of it for Sin that should be committed. So that as their Scheme no less reflects on the Righteousness of God than ours, so it much more obscures his Grace: Since there is more of Grace in saving a few, than in promising Salvation to all on Terms which he knows Man in his Fallen State cannot possibly of himself perform, and which he resolves not to enable him to perform. As for that other Opinion, it must be own'd they come nearer the Truth, in saying all the Elect shall certainly be saved; but seem widely to miss it in saying, all others may be saved if they will: The former err, *not knowing the Scripture*, in saying all may perish; these no less, in saying all may be saved; which is utterly repugnant to Scripture. But stay, 'tis only if they will; and truly if they are not willing to be saved, 'tis just with God they should perish. But where shall we find such a Man, or rather Monster? For tho' there are many that are *Lovers of Pleasure more than Lovers of God*, yet I presume 'tis hard to find one who when he comes to die had rather go to Hell than to Heaven. I have heard many call upon God to damn them, as if they as much desir'd Hell as the Devils dread to be tormented before the Time; but soon after they'll say, *As I hope to be Saved*: For tho' I confess the Hope of such is little worth, yet it shews their Tongue and Heart did not go together. So that if none are excluded Heaven but such as have no Will ever to come there, the Number of the Damned will be very small. But perhaps I am not come to their Meaning; they don't mean a bare Willingness to go to Heaven, but also a Willingness to use the Means, and do all they can. What then? If all is true that some say, God will do the rest. I confess 'tis better to attribute something of Salvation-Work to God

confess there are others who seem to come nearer the Truth, who tho' they cannot fall in with me, yet can't fall in with the former; but have found out a Medium: They own God hath chosen some from all Eternity, whom he will save, and in whom he will by his effectual Grace work those Things in them that in his Word he requires of them as necessary to Salvation, as Faith, Repentance, and new Obedience: But as for the rest, they are not so given over but they may be saved if they will. And thus both these Parties think they have fully clear'd the Righteousness of God, whatever becomes of Man. I shall answer to both. As to the former, in some Things we both agree that the Sin of Man is the only Cause of his perishing; but in this we differ, Say we, or rather the Word of God, that God determin'd to punish for Sin before it was committed; not that the Punishment was before the Sin was committed, but his Determination to punish was before, and that on the certain Foreknowledge that it would be committed; as Laws are always made, before they are or can be executed. They affirm God ordain'd no Man's Destruction tillin Time, when he saw they would deserve it. But sure I am, the Sovereignty of God appears even in this Scheme as well as in ours: For if it is ask'd, Why did not God decree to give Grace to one as well as to another? I retaliate, Why doth not God give Grace in Time to one as well as to another? Why was *Saul* singled out from his wicked Companions, who were all going to persecute the Saints? Sure, if his decreeing not to give Grace to some is inconsistent with Righteousness, his not giving it in Time without such a Decree (supposing it so) can no less reflect on his Righteousness. If it be answer'd, Those to whom God denies to give his Grace did not do as they might have done, and God foreknew this, yet 'tis probable some of these might do as much as *Saul*, or *Zaccheus*, or the Jailor, or the Thief on the Cross. And why did he not conquer others as well as them, but to shew his Sovereignty? Nor will they that deny God's Decrees say that he saves all without such a Decree, any more than we. And if Souls must perish for Sin, whether it is by antecedent or subsequent Determination, it differs not either as to the Misery of the Person suffering, or as

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God than Nothing, yet I cannot have so high an Opinion as some have of the poor Doings of carnal Men, nor ever shall, so long as these Scriptures are in my View, 2 Cor. iii. 5. Prov. xv. 8. Isa. i. 12, to 16. Phil. ii. 13. Nor did I ever yet see that carnal Man, no nor converted Man, but what might have done more than he did. So that if none of these Non-elect can get to Heaven but such as do all they can, and such a Man never was to be found, then Hell must take them all; and so we are where we were before. Thus have I finish'd my Doctrinal Part.

General IV. Is to improve what hath been said. Has God in Righteousness appointed some to Hell, as the just Reward of Sin, and is this Decree of so early a Date? I shall draw some Inferences from hence, as

1st Inference, How unjustly is the Righteousness of God reflected on by some! There were such in the Apostles Days, and there are such in our Day. What Wrong doth God do to any in decreeing to punish some in Hell, seeing that was for their Sins? Nay, his Righteousness is so far from being blemish'd hereby, that it shines forth in a glorious Manner herein; in that when he saw that Man would sin, he resolved to make Examples of some, tho' such as his own Hand would make, and such as otherwise he would have delighted in. As *Abraham* proved himself a Man fearing God, in that at his Command he was going to offer up *Isaac*; so God shews Himself a righteous God, in that when he saw some would sin he resolv'd, that tho' he was to make them he would not save them, and tho' he should form them yet he would shew them no Favour; and would have them thereby to know, that Justice and Righteousness were dearer to him than the Salvation of many Souls. Now the more God's Righteousness appears herein, the greater must their Sin be who accuse him of Unrighteousness. I scarce knew a surer Sign of one being in that Black List, than to deny what Scripture so clearly proves, or to accuse God of Unrighteousness in that which they cannot deny.

2d Inference. Did God from Eternity decree the Damnation of some for Sin? Then how evil was it in his Sight, and what a Motive should this be to make us dread com-

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mitting it: No sooner did God foresee that Sin would enter into the World; (tho' at as great a Distance, as Time is from Eternity) but his Heart was fill'd with Abhorrence of it, enter'd a Protest against it, and by an immutable Decree did appoint a Punishment suitable to it; and to this, among other Ends, that so he might prevent our taking the least Pleasure in it. This Decree is far more to be dreaded than that made against the three Children, *Dan. iii. 6.* These, in the same Hour that they refused to worship the Idol, were to be cast into the midst of a burning fiery Furnace, seven times hotter than it was wont; but this is not so dreadful as the Lake burning with Fire and Brimstone. They had God for them, to support and protect them; these have God an Enemy: And the Apostle tells us, *Heb. xi. 31. It is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living God.* Says God, *Job xli. 10. Who then is able to stand before me?* And how, above Measure, wicked must they be, and worthy of that Wrath, *who, as the Apostle says, Rom. i. 32. knowing the Judgment of God, that they that commit such Things are worthy of Death, not only do the same, but have Pleasure in them that do them.* I can't but think many oppose this Doctrine, because it hinders that Pleasure in Sin that otherwise they might take. When that impious King, that had all the Pleasures of Sense to divert him, saw that Handwriting on the Wall, it spoiled all; so that *his Countenance was changed, his Thoughts troubled him, his Joints of his Loins loosed, and his Knees smote one against another:* To see what was coming upon him, *Dan. v. 5, 6.* So one would think the Thoughts of God's Resolution to punish for Sin, should spoil the Sinner's Pleasure in it, and make him dread committing it, as much as Hell; and make him say as *David, who hath much more Cause so to do, Ps. cxix. 12. My Flesh trembleth for Fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments.* What, will any, instead of trembling at God's Judgments, charge him with Unrighteousness? Let them rather accuse themselves than God; and admire his Patience, that he hath not long ago executed his Decrees upon them as Vessels of Wrath, thus by Sin fitted for Destruction. Let such God-provoking Sinners duely

consider that Text, *Job xxxvi. 18. Because there is Wrath, beware, lest he take thee away with his Stroke; then a great Ransom cannot deliver thee.*

3^d Inference. If God hath thus decreed to punish for Sin; how stupid are the World to hear this, and not tremble! This present World is much like the old World that perish'd: Tho' many Messengers were sent to warn them of the Flood, yet nothing made the least Impression upon them; for 'tis said, *Luke xvii. 27. They eat, they drank, they married Wives, and were given in Marriage, until the Day that Noah entered into the Ark, and the Flood came and destroy'd them all.* The Criminal, tho' he loves his wicked Practice, yet, when he hears that the Dead-Warrant is sign'd, he trembles at it, if not stupid to the last Degree. When *Daniel* knew that the Writing was sign'd for to cast him into the Den of Lions; 'tis said, *Dan. vi. 10. He kneeled on his Knees three times a Day, and pray'd:* And by that Means escaped with his Life. So if Sinners were but sensible of the Wrath that is impending, and would cry to God for Mercy, Who can tell but they may yet escape? For tho' no Prayers nor Tears can change God's Decrees to punish for Sin: Yet as all that he thus decreed to punish were such as he foresaw would continue in Sin, without Repentance; so such as have Hearts to mourn for, or turn from Sin, have good Ground from God's Word to hope they shall never come into that Place of Torment, or be found among the Reprobates. Alas, many, instead of trembling at God's Wrath, bid Defiance to him, and even run upon the Bosses of his Buckler; they provoke God, as if they were stronger than he, and able to contend with the Almighty! They seem to say, as *Isa. v. 19. Let him make Speed, and hasten his Work, that we may see it; and let the Counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it:* As if they had said; we have often heard of these Things, now let us see them: You have oft told us how holy God is; now let this holy One draw nigh, and shew himself so: You have also told us of his Counsels; let him come and execute them, then we shall know it is so: We will believe it, when we see it. O desperate Sayings! Thus the Pa-

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tience of God is abused, and ends in their greater Obduration; as when *Pharaoh*, one of that cursed Crew, who, when he saw there was Respite, harden'd his Heart to his utter Overthrow. Thus God suffers them to fill up the Measure of their Iniquity, that so his Justice may appear in their Destruction. But, oh! what will such stupid Wretches do in the Day of Visitation? Says God to such, *Can thine Heart endure? Can thine Hurd be strong in the Day that I shall deal with thee? I the Lord have said it, and will do it.* Dives, who perhaps ne'er lift up his Eyes till in Hell, yet what sad Complaints doth he make there in vain: Those Eyes that the Sin hath shut, the Punishment will open: Hell will tame those heroic Spirits that now seem above all Fear: The less they fear, the more they will feel. God will one Day make them to know, that, in the Thing wherein they deal proudly, he is above them. Hence we read, *Rev. vi. 15, 16, 17. And the Kings of the Earth, and the great Men, and the rich Men, and the chief Captains, and the mighty Men, hid themselves in the Dens, and in the Rocks of the Mountains: And said to the Mountains and Rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the Face of him that sitteth on the Throne; and from the Wrath of the Lamb, for the great Day of his Wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?* What ail those valiant Captains, that have fought such desperate Battels, that they are so dispirited, and their Hearts even die within them? What, desire to have Mountains fall on them, and all for Fear of a Lamb? O the great Day of his Wrath is come, and that frightened them out of their Wits: They can't look that God in the Face, whose Law they had violated, and whose Grace they had despised! You that have heard many a rousing Sermon, in which you have been warn'd to flee from the Wrath to come, and it may be have mock'd at them; but you'll mock no more, when you come to be chastized, as your Congregation hath heard. What means the World then to be no more concern'd? Will nothing but Hell awake those drowsie Sinners? Better all the Men on Earth, or Devils in Hell, were against us, than God. If *Moses*, that faithful Servant of God, could say, when God came down in Mercy to give his Law, as *Heb. xii. 21. I ex-*

ceedingly fear and quake; What will rebellious Sinners do, when God comes in flaming Wrath to execute all the Curses written therein?

4th Inference. How mysterious are the Counsels of God? We may say in this Case, as *Rom. xi. 33. How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out!* The Apostle *Paul*, that was so well grounded in these Truths, is brought in more than once, saying, *What shall we say to these Things?* *Rom. ix. 14, 30.* And indeed they are more easily believed than comprehended. We shall never know these Things fully, till we get to Heaven. Those Mysteries are too deep for every one to unfold; and yet I have observed, none scarce insist so much on them, as they that can take in but little of them: And I am apt to believe, that the Prejudice many have receiv'd against these Truths, is not so much against the naked Truths, as against those unguarded Expressions wherewith some have covered them, and which are a just Stumbling-Block, and Rock of Offence. Tho' it is a great Truth, that God hath made such Decrees, yet we must have a Care in believing all to be Truth that some may affirm that believe them. Men may err, not only by inventing such Things as have nothing of Truth in them, but by misrepresenting what is Truth, and mixing their Fancies with it; and no Errors so like to take, as those that have a Mixture of Truth with them. I am deeply sensible of my Insufficiency for these Things, and will not stile myself *Orthodox*, as some in their Writings do, lest it is thought a begging that which some wil. never grant; but, with Submission to better Judgments, and with all Humility, will say, as one far greater than I once said of himself, *1 Cor. vii. 40. And I think also I have the Spirit of God:* And leave it to my judicious Reader to judge. And if what I have said may not be thought serviceable to reconcile the unhappy Differences on these deep Mysteries, which is one great Thing I propos'd herein, yet if it may but provoke some abler Pen to set forth the Truth in a clearer Light, I shall not think my Labour herein lost. As Truth is the only Thing I am seeking for; so for its Sake I shall love the Man that can direct me to it, of whatsoever Denomination he is; not seeking

seeking my own Profit, but the Profit of many, that they may be saved.

5th Inference. From what hath been spoken it appears that the Doctrines of Election and Reprobation, if rightly stated, are no such frightful Doctrines as some represent them to be: The former shews forth the Riches of Grace, and is full of Comfort to all such as are willing to embrace Christ; the latter shews forth God's Justice, and tends only to fright Sinners from their Sins. The Devil represents it as a dangerous Doctrine, that so he may keep Sinners in their Sins, while he tells them, if they are not elected, they will be damn'd, tho' they live ever so strictly; but doth not tell them, if they are damn'd, 'tis for their Sin: And his Ministers have learn'd to speak in his Dialect. And thus the Blame is laid on God's Decrees, that is owing wholly to themselves. Why should Men think hardly of God for his Righteousness? Let them rather be affrighted at their own Ignorance than at God's Truth. All the Truths of God are lovely, and should render him so, even his Decree to damn, as well as to save; since his Justice and Holiness shine forth in the former, as well as his Grace and Goodness in the latter. Justice is a lovely Thing among Men, and all good Men think it so, and no whit less lovely than Kindness. Why then should any think hardly of God for revealing this Truth, or of his faithful Ministers for preaching it? These great Truths are much depreiated, and their Advocates much despised, and he that adheres to them even makes himself a Prey; but it will be well for the following Age if they are not wanted when dead, that are so slighted while living. How fragrant is the Memory of those blessed Martyrs who sealed the Truth with their Blood, tho' laid down in more ambiguous Terms than what I am treating of? Of whom it may be said, as of *Abel*, tho' murder'd, that, *being dead, he yet speaketh.* *Cyrus*, that brave Soldier that had fought so many Battles, and was so renown'd for Victories, it was said of him, when dead, *They bury'd his Body, but not his Fame!* As God has always raised up some to plead for his Truths, so we have Cause to hope he will do it, and that Truth will never want some Witnesses; yet the present

sent ill Disposition of Things give sad Cause to fear that some valiant Champions for the Truth will be much wanted, not to say desired, in the following Age. Religion is now at a low Ebb, and 'tis to be fear'd this Decay of practical Godliness springs from the departing of many from the Truths of God; an unsound Heart is seldom accompanied with true Holiness of Life.

6th Inference. Has God, in a Way of Righteousness, decreed the eternal Destruction of some, as the just Reward of Sin? How great then must their Obligations be to love, serve, and honour God, who have any comfortable Ground to hope they are not of that Number. Who is he that maketh us to differ from the Damn'd? The greater our Deliverance is, and the more unworthy we are of it, the greater are our Obligations to him that is the Author of it: This is not only a Deliverance of our Bodies, but of our precious Souls. *David* tells us, *Pf. cxvi. 8. For thou hast deliver'd my Soul from Death, mine Eyes from Tears, and my Feet from falling; and adds, ver. 16. O Lord, truly I am thy Servant, I am thy Servant!* This is one great End of our Deliverance, to tie us the faster to God; and that, being thus deliver'd, we might serve God in Holiness and Righteousness all the Days of our Life. See a full Text, *1 Thes. v. 9. For God hath not appointed us to Wrath, but to obtain Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ:* How sweet is every Word! He had been speaking of the Destruction of others, *ver. 3. For when they shall say, Peace and Safety; then sudden Destruction cometh upon them, as Travail upon a Woman with Child.* But, says he, he hath not appointed us to Wrath; tho' he hath others, yet not us: Nor doth their Happiness consist only in not being appointed unto Wrath, but they are appointed unto Salvation. What, deliver'd not only from a Dunghill-State, but advanc'd to a Kingdom! What, deliver'd at once from the greatest Misery, and advanced to the highest Felicity! What, deliver'd from Devils, and made equal with Angels! Yea, and in some Sense above them. What, not only deliver'd from being Companions with Devils and damn'd Souls, but joined to the general Assembly of the Church of the First-born, whose Names are written
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in Heaven, and to Jesus the Mediator, &c! What, deliver'd from hearing the dismal Sobbs and Cries of the Damn'd, and brought to hear the melodious Songs of those about the Throne! What, not only snatched as a Brand out of the Fire, and deliver'd from being tormented in those Flames that never shall be quenched; but brought to lie in *Abraham's Bosom*, and to partake of those unspeakable Joys at God's Right Hand, and Pleasures for ever more! And that which is yet more strange, is, all this is through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us! What, the Son of God die, that Rebels might live! Was he made poor, yea, did he make himself poor, that we might be rich! Did he wear a Coat without Seam, that we might wear the best Robe! Was his beautiful Face spit upon, and his lovely Visage more marred than any Man's, that we might be more comely thro' the Comeliness he put upon us! Did he lie in a Manger, among Beasts, that we might lie in *Abraham's Bosom*! Did he wear a Crown of Thorns, that we might wear a Crown of Glory! Was he despis'd, that we might be honour'd! Was he a Man of Sorrows, that we may ever rejoyce! Was he forsaken of his Father, that we may be brought into his Presence! And, in a Word, did he as it were leap into the Flames to pluck us out! What Obligations must such be under to love, and honour him? Hence says the Apostle, *2 Cor. v. 15. And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them.* As we have not our Life from ourselves, so neither should we live to ourselves; but as Christ died to purchase it, so he is worthy of Glory by it. Says the Apostle, *1 Cor. vi. 20. Ye are bought with a Price; therefore glorify God in your Body, and in your Spirit, which are God's.* Bodily Service only, is too low to answer such high Obligations. Suppose when a Soul hath been in Hell many Years, God should knock off the Chains, and set the Prisoner free, reserving others in that Place of Torment; What Ingratitude would such a Soul be chargeable with, if he did not devote himself to his Service that set him free; or ever after, for Fear of suffering from Men, did turn his Back on God? And yet such a Mercy comes far short of what
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God has bestow'd on such as he hath saved, for as much as to be kept out of Hell is far more desirable than to be fetch'd from thence. Judge in yourselves of what I say. Suppose it was put to your Choice, whether to be fetch'd out of Hell, or never to come there; How joyfully and thankfully would ye embrace the latter? Oh what Manner of Persons then should they be, in all holy Conversation and Godliness, who share in such a Deliverance as this? How should the Bands he hath loosed, tie us faster to himself?

7th Inference. Hath God appointed so many to Destruction for Sin, How should such as are secured from the Wages dread doing the Work of it? Let us not think the better of Sin, or take the more Freedom to commit it, because secured from that Wrath due for it. This should be so far from encouraging to sin, that it should be a great Preservative from it; and will be so in all that can see their Interest in it, or have but any good Hope thereof. That is a right Forsaking of Sin, when we do it more on Account of the Evil that is in it, and Dishonour that comes to God by it, than on the Account of the Punishment that we are liable to for it. To abstain from Sin only for Fear of Hell, shews more Love to ourselves than true Love to God, or Hatred of the Sin we abstain from: But to forsake Sin, as Dishonouring to God, and Defiling to ourselves, is to act from the most Evangelical Considerations. And sure I am, the best of Saints have Need to use all the Means that God has appointed for the preventing of Sin, since they are so prone thereunto, and God is so dishonour'd by it. Let all therefore that profess themselves Saints, shun all Appearance of Evil. For any to pretend to know they are not Reprobates, and yet allow themselves in Sin, looks like such as are given over to *strong Delusions that they should believe a Lie, that all they might be damned who believe not the Truth, but have Pleasure in Unrighteousness, 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.* What, shall any of God's Saved ones be like *Nehab*, that was deliver'd from the Flood, and saw his Neighbours and Acquaintance perish round about, and after that be Drunk? God forbid. Let us much rather imitate him in this, that when the whole Earth was corrupt and fill'd

fill'd with Violence, yet that he was one that was Righteous before God in that evil Generation, *Gen. vii. 1.* Or shall we be like *Lot*, who tho' he was deliver'd from that Storm of Fire and Brimstone in which he saw many consumed, yet soon after committed Incest? God forbid. Let us much rather learn to imitate him in that worthy Character given him, *2 Peter ii. 8.* *For that Righteous Man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous Soul from Day to Day with their unlawful Deeds.* If we have good Hope that we shall not partake with the perishing World of their Plagues, let us not partake in their Sins: Let us come out from among them, and be separate: Let us enter our Protest against them, that their Works are wicked. And as God has shewn our Souls are dear to him, in delivering them from going down into the Pit of Destruction; let us shew his Honour is dear to us, in denying ourselves in our dearest Corruptions.

Last Inference. Hath God in Righteousness thus decreed the Destruction of Some, yea of Many, yea of the far Greatest Part of Mankind, as we have Reason to think, and that for Sin? What Cause is here of Admiration of the free Grace of God to such as have attain'd to any well-grounded Assurance that they are not in this Black List, and that they shall be of that Number that escape, while *the Consumption decreed shall overflow with Righteousness, Isaiah x. 22.* God would have been Righteous in their Destruction as well in the Destruction of others, being all by Nature equally the Children of Wrath. We have Reason to think many are now in Hell, who never committed such Sins as some of these Saved Ones have done. So that this great Difference as to the Eternal State of Men, that some are Saved and others Damned, doth not arise from any Worthiness in them that are saved, but in the Grace and Goodwill of him that saved them. Those that die have destroy'd themselves, and so have no Cause to complain; those that are saved are saved by Grace, and therefore ought to be thankful, and say as *1 Cor. xv. 10.* *But by the Grace of God I am what I am.* How will such admire distinguishing Grace to all Eternity, when they come to know better what the Happiness

pineness is of those that are saved, and the Misery of them that are not! O how will the dying Sobs and Groans of the Damn'd, when they shall receive that Heart-breaking Sentence *depart from me ye Cursed into everlasting Fire*, raise their Songs of Praise to the highest Note, who shall be received to *the Right-Hand*! How will the very Heavens eccho with their Praises, to see so many of their Fellow Creatures, not only Men that were perhaps their Companions in Sin, and drawn into it by their Means, but also Angels sinking together into that bottomless Pit; and in the mean-time see themselves safely Ark'd, and pluck'd as *Brands out of the Fire*! 'Tis hard for to say which will be loudest, the Groans of the former, or the Songs of the latter. O let us begin that Work now, that we hope to employ'd in then: Let us get our Harps tuned for that Song, *which none could learn but those that were redeemed from the Earth*, Rev. xiv. 3. 'Tis said Chap. xv. 3. *And they sang the Song of Moses the Servant of God, and the Song of the Lamb*: Now what was Moses's Song? You have both the Song and the Occasion of it in *Exodus xv. 1*. *Moses* being pursued by proud *Pharoah*, he overtakes them at the Red Sea, where they were in very great Distress: Here were high Mountains on each Side, a numerous incensed Army behind in Sight of them, and a deep Sea before them; but that God that had wrought so many Wonders for their Deliverance, now works one more, and makes a Way thro' that Deep for his Redeemed. *Pharoah* follows them into the Sea, and there he and his numerous Hosts are drowned. When *Moses* was got safe to Shoar, and saw his Enemies all drown'd, he sings a SONG of PRAISE to GOD. So will GOD's SAVED ONES, when they see they are got safe Home out from off the troublesome Sea of this World, and see their Enemies cast into the bottomless Pit, sing the Song of the LAMB, with more Pleasure, and higher Admiration, than *Moses* did, as their Deliverance is much greater than his. His Deliverance was only of the Body, but theirs of the Soul. His Deliverance was only from Men, but theirs from Devils; and which is much greater, from the Wrath of Almighty God, into whose Hands 'tis a fearful Thing to fall. Oh

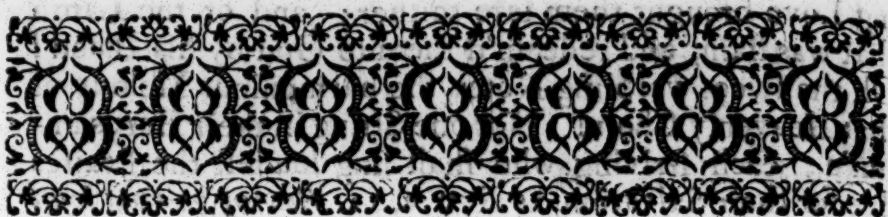
how

His own Destruction.

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how will they sing the loud Praises of God, whose Elect-
ing Love brought them safe thither; and of the Lamb
that was slain, and redeem'd them to God by his Blood!
Oh the sweet warbling Notes, the harmonious Melody of
that Heavenly Choir! Not one String in their Harps un-
run'd; each striving who shall sing loudest the Praises
due for their Salvation, as *Rev. v, 12. Saying with a loud*
Voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive Po-
wer, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour,
and Glory, and Blessing. 'Tis recorded, that when *Solo-*
mon was anointed King, there were such loud and joyful
Shouts that the very Earth rent, *1 Kings i 40.* And I am
persuaded the very Heavens will as much rend with the
Triumphs of that Day, *and loud Hallelujahs to him that*
sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb, who will appear
greater than *Solomon* there. And shall we so greatly re-
joice there, and yet go hanging down the Head as a Bul-
rush? Let us be tuning up our Harps against that Bles-
sed Day, when it will be said *Go forth to meet the Bride-*
groom. Let the Consideration of that Happiness we shall
receive in the World to come rather comfort us, than all
the Trials and Troubles of this World cast us down: And
let us reckon, and I am persuaded we shall not be out
therein, that the Sufferings of this present Time, put them
all together, are not worthy to be compared to the Glory
that shall be revealed in us. Don't let us sink under the
Cross, who have such a Crown of Glory hanging over our
Heads. Let the Temper of our Minds bear Proportion
to the Privileges we enjoy; that so we may have the
Comfort, and the Glory be given to GOD.





ANIMADVERSIONS

On a BOOK just publish'd intitl'd,

FATE and DESTINY

Inconsistent with Christianity.

WHEN my Book was about Half printed, I saw in the Advertisements a Book just publish'd, intitl'd, *Fate and Destiny inconsistent with Christianity, &c.* by which the World may see, what just Cause I had to write mine: When such as hold the great Truths of the Gospel are not only thought Erroneous, but even Unchristian'd for so doing: Which Charge rises so much the higher, by how much more extensive the Ideas of some Men are touching Christianity; in whose Judgment, not to be a Christian is either to be a Heathen, or a vile Person to the last Degree. And when Things are come to this, it behoves us to maintain our Cause openly, or wholly to quit it, and leave it to the Lashes of the most furious Opposers. Now tho' I heartily embrace some of those Doctrines this Gentleman labours to confute, I am yet so much of a Christian as not to retaliate, but hope that thro' a Mistake he has said this,

Had this Gentleman singled out the Doctrine of *Absolute Reprobation* from that of *Absolute Election*, and encounter'd only with that, I am apt to think he might with much Ease and Safety have gain'd a total Victory over it: Or had he wanted more Strength; I should freely

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ly have lifted myself in the same Service, to do all I could towards so good a Work: But to *Tack* such a hateful and frightful Thing as *Absolute Reprobation* to such a harmless and lovely Thing as *Absolute Election*, as such Confederates that the latter could not stand if the former fell; or, as if there was as great a Shew of Unrighteousness in God to work Grace in some, as to punish others, without any respect to Sin as the Cause moving him thereunto; this has render'd that Part of his Performance as mean and contemptible to me, as the Doctrine he endeavours to confute, and which he has dress'd up in the most ugly Shapes, can possibly be to him.

I would in Charity persuade myself, as little of a Christian as I am, that this Gentleman's Design herein was good; namely, to promote practical Holiness, a Thing so much wanting among Men of all Persuasions in this Day; and to stop the Tide of Profaness, which so much abounds: But what Pity 'tis that such evil and indirect Means should be used to obtain so great and good an End; as if practical Holiness could not be set up, till such divine Truths as have the greatest Tendency thereunto were so thrown down as to rise no more. For such as we do affirm to be chosen to Happiness in the World to come, we do with equal Confidence affirm to be chosen to Holiness in this World; as the Means without which that End cannot be obtained, tho' not the procuring Cause thereof. Nor doth this destroy the Nature of a Reward in a Gospel-Sense, seeing the Persons thus chosen do therein act with the most noble Freedom of Mind and Delight therein; such as none can do, that act in their own natural Power: The latter at best act herein but as prest Soldiers, the former act as Volunteers; but this flows from electing and renewing Grace, and is not implanted in every, or any of *Adam's* fallen Posterity naturally. Not that the Will is forced herein, for then it could not be said to be a Will; but it is sweetly drawn by the mighty Power of the Spirit of God into a chearful Compliance with the Will of God: Hence 'tis said, *Phil. ii. 13. For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good Pleasure.*

God

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God having by his special Grace put a new Bias into the Will; it now chuses what before it rejected, and rejects what before it chose. This Gentleman seems to attribute all to the Grace of God, not only that we do, but that we will; and so I suppose he will as much attribute it to Grace, that we have Feet to walk, Hands to work, and so many Fingers on a Hand: But he must be Eagle-ey'd that can in the clearest Sunshine discern the Difference between free Grace in his Notion of it, and free Will in Mine. I own our natural Will may be in a Sense said to be by Grace, seeing he that made us rational Creatures, might have made us Stones, devoid of Sense; and if this is the common Grace he so contends for, I think it may be safely granted, without the least Injury to our Cause: But to say that this is all the Grace by which we act in believing, or any other Act of true evangelical Obedience, is what we shall never grant, nor will he with all his subtil Turnings and Windings be able to prove. For tho' it is natural for us to will, or common Grace (if any will so express it) enables all Men so to do, yet to will well, is not owing only to this common Grace, but to that special and efficacious Grace that maketh all Things new, and without which we shall never chuse the Things that please God.

All that are skillful in spiritual Husbandry, may easily see this Gentleman's Ground is sown with Tares as well Wheat; I suppose an Enemy hath done this, that while we are plucking up the Tares, we should be forced to pluck up the Wheat also, or that both may grow together till the Harvest. He has join'd *Absolute Reprobation* (which Thing we hate) to the Doctrine of *Absolute Election*, in Hope that by throwing down the former, he might weaken the latter: But since God hath not joined these together, I shall venture to take them asunder; and not suffer so clear a Truth as the latter, to be smother'd in the thick Mists of the former; or, like a Ship richly laden, to be grabled to an empty Fire-Ship, and sunk with it; since it utterly disclaims all Relation to it, Approbation of it, or Acquaintance with it.

I observe in this Gentleman's Writing, that he seems to have a higher Veneration for Reason, than for Divine Revelation,

Revelation, in speaking so contemptuously of such Divine Truths, as will not fall under Mood and Figure. One great Reason why the Gospel met with such Opposition from the World in the first planting it, because so far above the Reach of Reason: Hence says the Apostle, *Col. ii. 8. Beware lest any Man spoil you through Philosophy, and vain Deceit, &c.* The Apostle thought it the Way to be spoiled, to give more Heed to Philosophy than to the Gospel of Christ. I cannot see that the inspired Penmen had so great a Regard to the Rules of Logick as some would intimate: They seem'd rather to adapt their Discourses to the meanest Capacities in their differing Dialects that all might be edified. To give one Instance, *Psal. lxvi. 18, 19. If I regard Iniquity in my Heart, the Lord will not hear my Prayer; but verily God hath heard me. ----- Blessed be God, &c.* He begins in the Form of an hypothetical Syllogism; the First Proposition is, *If I regard Iniquity in my Heart, the Lord will not hear me.* Second Proposition, *But verily God hath heard me.* The Conclusion should have been, *therefore I do not regard Iniquity in my Heart.* But he draws a more Evangelical Conclusion, *Blessed be God.* The Conclusion according to Rule would have been to the Praise of the Prophet, but this concludes to the Praise of God. From whence we may learn, That 'tis better to transgress the Rules of Logick, than rob God of his Glory by keeping close to such Rules. And I can't but fear, that was it not for Advantage, some of the *Learned Criticks* of our Age would fall down-right on the Scripture itself, and condemn it for the same Reason the Heathen Philosophers did of old, as well as condemn those Truths that are proved from it. And when this is the best Use that is made of human Learning, it would be well for the World if it was out of it. This oft furnishes Men with Arguments against the Truth, but very seldom (without the Grace of God, and Teachings of his Spirit) is of any Service to it. As this Idol has begun to fall, so I am perswaded it must down lower yet when the true Interest of Christ comes to flourish: And I do hope the Time is at hand, when such as have the *Special* Grace of God, and have the Teachings of the Spirit, (tho' deem'd by the Carnal World

World ignorant and unlearned Men) shall be more esteemed than an learned *Nicodemus* that knows nothing of the New Birth.

This Gentleman hath by *Absolute Election* and *Reprobation* explain'd what he meant by *Fate* and *Destiny*, making the latter exegetical of the former. I shall not write one Line for *Absolute Reprobation*, believing there is no such Thing; and if any have affirm'd it, let them defend it if they are able. I shall therefore dismiss that Head, and only hold *Absolute Election* a little under Examination, whether Guilty or Not Guilty of those black Indictments brought in against it. By *Absolute Election* I no wise do understand it, as if God decreed to save any without Holiness; but that this Holiness either done or foreseen was no moving Cause of their being elected, but rather an Effect thereof. The Sun when risen doth not more certainly produce Light, than this will sooner or later produce Holiness: And whatsoever springs not from hence, is at best but a Lifeless Form of Godliness. Therefore for any to suppose that we think that the End to which such are chosen can be attain'd without the Means, when we are said to be *chosen to Salvation through Sanctification*, is to deal unfairly with us. What is innocent ought to be acquitted, as much as what is faulty ought to be condemned. I shall therefore hear what can be said against *Absolute Election*, before I pass the same Sentence on it that I have on *Absolute Reprobation*; supposing these two to differ in their Nature as much as Light and Darkness, Heaven and Hell. And I cannot but think that the Reason why this Doctrine is condemn'd by some, as leading to Rebellion against the King of Heaven, is owing to the false Witnesses that come in against it; and that if all the Records were search'd concerning it, it will be found the truest Friend to its Sovereign; and that they will be worthy to suffer Shame who are its false Accusers, rather than That should be cast out of Favour that is so falsely accused. And supposing this, I shall freely become an Advocate for it. This calls to Mind a like Passage we read of that wicked *Haman*, who informed the King that *Mordecai* was an Enemy to his Government; and to be revenged on him, sought not only to

destroy

FATE and DESTINY, &c. 201

destroy him, but all his People the *Jews*, the People that God then own'd as a peculiar People to himself, *Esf. iii.* and obtain'd a Decree to put them to Death: But God by his good Providence so ordered Matters, that the King could not sleep, and commanded the Records to be searched, and there found it written, that this very *Mordecai* that was accused as an Enemy to the King, had been an Instrument of Saving his Life, by discovering of such as sought to take it away. The King being inform'd of the good Service he had done, empower'd him and his People to take Vengeance on their Enemies; and promotes them to Honour, while the false Accuser and all his Crew were hang'd on the same Gallows prepared for good *Mordecai*. So who can tell but tho' *Absolute Election* hath been accused to be as great an Enemy to the Law of GOD, as *Mordecai* was of being an Enemy to K. *Ahasuerus*; yet upon a faithful Search of what is recorded of it in the Book of God, it may be found a true Subject; and that both it and its Friends, as much as now despised, may be promoted to Honour; when all its false Accusers, by whatsoever Names or Titles dignified or distinguish'd, may be brought to suffer the Shame due to them, as the greatest Enemies to the King of Glory? And that the Difference between *Absolute Election* and *Absolute Reprobation* may be as great, as between Christ and the Thieves that suffered with him? And that all the Enemies of this Truth may be made to bow before it, as that Wicked *Haman* did to Good *Mordecai*?

But, I come to the Trial, Whether *Absolute Election* is guilty, or not guilty, of what is laid to its Charge? And here I shall draw up the Indictment, then bring in the Witnesses, and shew what its Advocate hath to say why Sentence may not pass upon it: The Cause to be tried before Judge *Love-Truth*.

The Indictment. *Absolute Election* stands here accused, as a Traitor against God and its Country; as encouraging to Rebellion against God, injurious to the Commonwealth of *Israel*, and a Ringleader to all Vice and Immoralities.

Advocate. We demand Proof, and plead not guilty. Let the Witnesses be call'd.

Cc

Witnesses

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Witnesses. Hymeneus and *Philetus, come forth and declare what you have to say against the Prisoner.

H. and P. We do firmly believe all to be true that is in the Indictment, and have been brought into that Belief by the Report of all our ignorant and loose-living Neighbours, which we take to be very honest Men, and good Christians.

Adv. My Lord, We deny the Things to be true that are here witnessed. I am acquainted with the Prisoner, and do know it hath always behav'd itself well: And tho' some few of its pretended Friends may have in some Measure been guilty, yet never were encouraged hereunto by the Prisoner, which always cried aloud against such evil Practice. And further we have this to say, that the Witnesses here speaking are not fit to be credited, they themselves having been more guilty of the same Practices; and therefore what they say is rather in Prejudice against us, than in Love to their King and Country. And further, my Lord, I will undertake to prove by that Law by which the Prisoner is to be Tried, that none of these Things are true that are witnessed; and the Scripture being the Rule of Judgment, to that I appeal as Witness of what I say.

Absolute Election is no such New and Upstart Thing as some imagine, and would persuade others to believe. I could bring in a Cloud of Witnesses, of far greater and better Reputation than these that are risen up against us, to speak for us. I could bring in the *Church of England* as speaking for us, in her 17th Article She speaks thus, *Before the Foundations of the World were laid, He constantly decreed by his Counsel, &c.* Now what Conditions could there be to move God to chuse any before any had a Being? But since we have appealed to Scripture as Judge in this Case, I shall in a few Words shew what we have to say for ourselves from That; and I find it thus recorded there, *Eph. i. 4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy, and without Blame before him in Love.*

Judge. What do you gather from thence in Favour of your Cause?

Adv. We gather Three Things: 1. That some were elected from Eternity, for it was *before the Foundation of*

the World. And thus 'tis said of *Jacob*, that *he was loved before he was born*; which Love we take to consist in that eternal Purpose that was in God of Saving *Jacob*. 2. We gather from hence, that Election was Absolute and Unconditional, that for which we stand accused: For what could there be for God to see out of Himself to move Him thereunto, when God saw Nothing in Being but himself? Thus *Jacob* is said to be Beloved and Elected before he had done [any] Good, *Rom. ix. 11.* 3. We gather from hence, that this Doctrine no Way leads to Impiety, or a vain Life: Not to Impiety towards God, or Unrighteousness towards Man; but is a Means of both Holiness and Righteousness, because 'tis said *He chose them that they should be holy*; which they would never have been, if not chosen to it. Yea 'tis said, that they *Should be holy before him*; noting their Sincerity: Others may seem to be holy before Men, but such only as were chosen thereunto are really so before God. And adds, *in Love*; i. e. to God and one another: A Thing so necessary to accompany all our Services, that without it we are but as *a sounding Brass or tinkling Cymbal*, which may make a great Noise but hath no Life in it, *1 Cor. xiii. 1.* All these Things being proved, we plead for a Discharge from the Indictment brought against us. And to this End we have this further to say, that we are *Protestants*, and do declare against the *Popish* Doctrine of Merit, and so ought not to be condemn'd by *Protestants*: *Wisdom is justified of her Children.* The Apostle tells us, *Rom, iii. 20. By the Deeds of the Law shall no Flesh be justified in his Sight.* So *Gal. ii. 21. I do not frustrate the Grace of God; for if Righteousness come by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain.* That must needs be a pernicious Doctrine, that at once frustrates the Grace of God, and renders Christ's Death in vain, which is the only procuring Cause of Man's Salvation. And as this must be granted, so the Doctrine that is contrary to ours doth (with humble Submission to Your Honour's Opinion in this Case) unavoidably lead us this Way. For if our Antagonists by pleading for a Necessity of good Works in such as are elected, in Order to their being saved, mean no more than the Presence of them in all such as shall be saved, they know we grant it: And so

they do but beat the Air in contending with us, or rather like Madmen they beat themselves: But we have learnt they are Men of Sense, and therefore must have something else in View: For who will contend, and so earnestly too, for that which they may have without contending; unless they do it for Contention's Sake? If therefore by a Necessity of good Works in such as are elected they mean, that those good Works were a proper moving Cause of our Election, we cannot see (excuse our Eyesight) but this leads us into the very Dregs of the *Popish* Doctrine of Merit of Condignity. To clear this the Apostle tell us, *2 Thej. ii. 13. Because God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation.* Now if our Election secures our Salvation, and our good Works procure our Election, they are as much the moving Cause of our Salvation as they are of our Election, which is as much as any *Jesuit* need desire in Favour of his Doctrine. Nor are we only terrified at that Doctrine as it looks towards *Rome*, but also as according to our Judgment it looks with equal Countenance on the Doctrine of *Free Will*. For tho' our Antagonists, to colour over these pernicious Principles, pretend to attribute as much to the Grace of God as any can do, by saying 'tis by Grace not only that we do Good, but that we have any Desire or Will to do good: And who could think there could be a Snake in this sweet Flower? But when they come to explain what this Grace is, or wherein it doth consist, they are far from thinking this to be thro' special Grace, or the powerful and supernatural Influences of the Spirit, and only to consist in that common Grace that God has endow'd every Man with, in giving him a Faculty to will, when He might have made him a Creature devoid of Reason. And did ever any *Arminian* in his right Wits, or even *Arminius* himself desire more or grant less. He had too much Reason to suppose that Man created his own Natural Will, and too little Grace to own that it was through special Grace that he wills what is Good. If we are mistaken in what we have said, we shall be glad to be set right in this Matter.

Judge. Are there any more Witnesses against the Prisoner? Yes, * *Alexander* has somewhat to say. I *Alexander* am Witness that some that hold this Doctrine are

* *1 Tim. i. 19, 20.*

none

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none of the best of Men, but loose Livers, and therefore no doubt but this *Absolute Election* was the Cause thereof.

Adv. There are some in the World that make a sad Outcry against such Things as they dream have a Tendency to Sin, as if they were the Men, and all Holiness and Righteousness was to die with them; and yet none practice true Piety less, of which Sort is this Witness: And he, being guilty of far greater Immoralities than he can charge on us, is not fit to be heard. But suppose it true that he says, yet we have a *Maxim, Culpa Personæ non transit in Rem*; the Fault of the Person doth not defile the Cause. As we are not to think the better of an Error, because a good Man may hold it; so neither are we to think the worse of a Truth, because an evil Man may abuse it. We must not deny Christ to be the Son of God, because the Devil confess'd him to be so. If this Doctrine taught any evil Practice, much might be said against it; but if not, let the evil Practice be condemn'd, and the Person doing it, if worthy; but let not the Truth suffer on that Account. 'Tis well known to all, that none walk more closer with God than such as most stedfastly embrace this Doctrine. Nor can we conceive any more forcible Ties than by Love. Kings think it a more likely Way to win over disaffected Subjects by giving them Places of Profit, than by threatening to punish them with the utmost Severity. And *Paul* tells us that *the Love of Christ constraineth us*, 2 Cor. v. 14. And says God, *Hos. xi. 4. I drew them with Cords of a Man, with Bands of Love; and I was to them as they that take off the Yoke on their Jaws, and I laid Meat unto them.* He did not draw them by putting on a new Yoke, but by taking that off that was on; nor by taking their Meat from them, but by laying it to them. We have much more to say to clear us from the Charge brought in against us, that we are Ringleaders to Wickedness, in affirming that no good Works done or foreseen were the moving Cause of our Election; for in so saying, we have no such Views that such as are chosen can get to Heaven whether they perform good Works or not; no, we own that the Intervention of Faith and sincere Obedience is so necessary between the Decree and the enjoying the End decreed, that the latter can never be obtain'd without

without the former; and as necessary as perfect Obedience is under the Covenant of Works, in order to our obtaining Life thereby. But we look on this sincere Obedience, in all the Branches of it, to flow from, and not to be any Motive to, or Cause of our Election: Nor can we conceive such Obedience can come in at any other Door, or form any other Ideas of Election agreeable to Scripture. There we are told that Election is of Grace, *Rom. xi. 5.* so *2 Tim. i. 9.* There we are also told how inconsistent Grace and Works are as the Cause of our Salvation, *Rom. xi. 6.* from whence to us it seems clear, that those mutually overthrow each other as Causes of our Salvation, as much as *Fate and Destiny* doth Christianity. Tho' as Companions they friendly agree to go Hand in Hand. And since this our profess'd Principle hath no such Tendency as hath been falsely insinuated, to encourage to the Neglect, or but careless Performance of any Duty that God commands towards himself, or our Neighbour, much less to commit any gross Impieties; but much rather excites to the former, and deters us from the latter: And seeing there is such an Agreeableness between our Practice and Opinion; we plead for a Discharge from the Indictment, as Not Guilty. Yea we are so far from being led by our Opinion into the Neglect of Duty; that we judge the contrary Opinion much rather exposes to it, as we are assur'd 'tis more attended with it. And therefore we do think ourselves bound to continue in it, till further convinc'd of our Mistake. For if no Election but for good Works, and Man in his fallen State being unable of himself to perform any good Works formally so, as seems clear to us from *Rom. iii. 12.* *Phil. ii. 13.* *Rom. viii. 7, 8.* it seems from hence there could be no such Thing as Election to Salvation; no, not in Time: So that the World must remain in a Deluge of Sin here; and sink into Hell unavoidably hereafter, as the just Reward thereof. Then there could be no such Thing as Sanctification in this World; and, for Want of it, no Salvation in the World to come. So that the contrary Doctrine can no ways tend to excite to any other Performances but what are done by the Power of a fallen Creature, without the Assistance of special and supernatural Grace; and what that Power is

we may judge; not only from Scripture, but also from what is so well expressed by the Church of *England* on this Head. And tho' we have no Reason to suppose that your Honour is of the Opinion of that Church in all Things, much less that you think her infallible; yet we hope you will fall in with her in this Thing, in Favour of us. And we have this to say, they that speak against us are Members, yea Born-members of that Church, and we can't but think it hard to suffer by their Means for holding that very Faith that they have tied themselves by all that is sacred to profess. She thus speaks Article the 10th, *The Condition of Man, after the Fall of Adam, is such, that he cannot turn, and prepare himself, by his own natural Strength and good Works, to Faith and Calling upon God; wherefore we have no Power to do good Works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the Grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we have a good Will, and working in us when we have that good Will.* And that none should think she means only common Grace, she adds, Article the 13th, *Works done, before the Grace of Christ, and Inspiration of his Spirit, are not acceptable to God, as they spring not from Faith in Jesus Christ; neither do they make Men meet to receive Grace, or deserve the Grace of Congruity; yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the Nature of Sin.* Hæc illa. Now if by Works done before the Grace of Christ, she means Works done before common Grace only, then this supposes them to work before they have a Being, seeing all Men living are indu'd with such a Power in the Opinion of some. And therefore she can mean no less than special and efficacious Grace. From whence we gather, from the Judgment of that Church, that there could be no good Works done by us without special Grace. And since all must be resolved into the special Grace of God, why not to his special Grace toward us in electing us before Time, as well as to special Grace wrought in us in Time; since the Scripture equally attributes it to both, as is clear from 2 *Tim.* i. 9. compar'd with *Eph.* ii. 8, 10?

Judge. Have you any further Witnesses?

Ans. Yes, * *Apollyon.*

* *Rev.* ix. 11.

Apollyon,

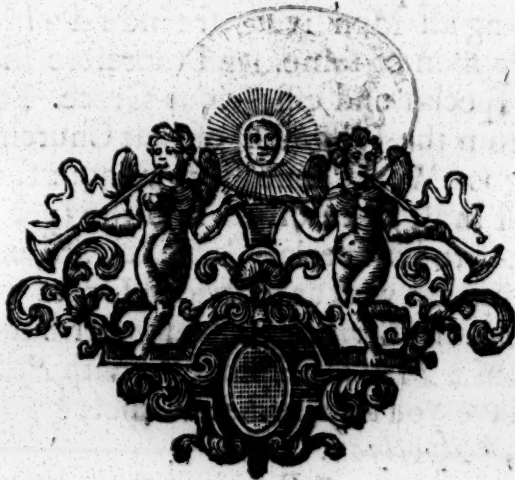
Apollyon. I am one of great Authority, and even a King over the *Blacks*, and this Prisoner hath caused great Uneasiness to my Mind; by this Means I have had many of my Subjects not only to be made disaffected to me, but to enter into open Hostility against me. Had it not been for that, I should certainly have kept all my Subjects in Peace; and therefore, as I have a Regard to the Peace of my Kingdom, which is very large, I can't but witness my Abhorrence of it, and wish it was out of this World.

Adv. My Lord, Tho' this Witness is a known common Lier, and a Disturber of all true Peace; yet what hath been spoken may be granted to be true, without the least Injury to us, tho' spoken with the greatest Malice against us. For tho' we have been a Means, and the only Means of drawing away his Subjects from him; yet we have by this Means brought them into Subjection to One greater, and that hath a more undoubted Right to them than he can pretend unto: And all that are at War with him, have list'd themselves into the Service of the King of Heaven, and so ought not to be deemed Rebels, but loyal Subjects; a just War being to be preferr'd before an unjust Peace.

Judge. I have heard the Matter debated, and am of Opinion that there is more of Malice in the Accusers, than Fault in the Accused: I do therefore fully Acquit the Prisoner from all the Indictments; and if any further Witness shall come in, it shall be determin'd *Above*.

P. S. The Author being absent, the Reader is desir'd to excuse some small Mistakes.

F I N I S.



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